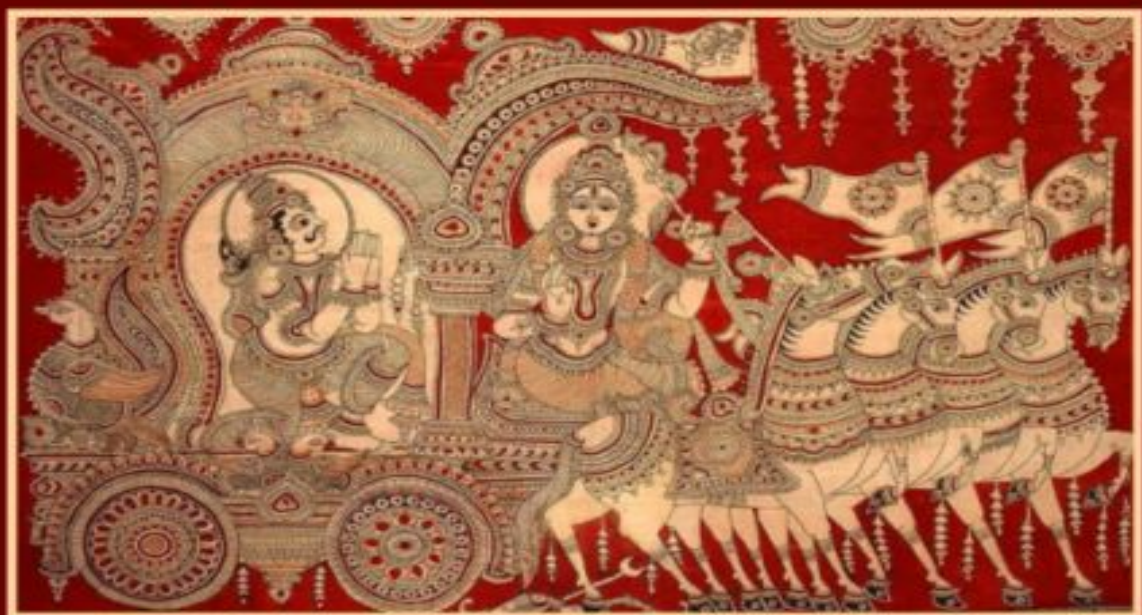




BHAGAVAD GITA

Translation by
Satyanarayana Dasa

A S I RECALL THE TEACHINGS imparted to me by Śrī Govinda, which are appropriate to all time, place, and circumstance and which alleviate the agony of the heart, my mind is now captivated.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.15.27

At one time or another in life, everyone is bound to face stressful situations of varying intensity. Even a great hero like Arjuna, who belonged to a royal family, found himself in distress on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. People in general adopt a variety of strategies to cope with distress. Some endeavor to discover its root cause and redress it. Others occupy themselves in distractions to avoid the problem altogether, becoming obsessed with work, entertainment, shopping, food, or intoxication as forms of escapism.

Arjuna was fortunate to have Śrī Kṛṣṇa as his chariot driver, symbolic of the divine guidance that can enable the self to navigate through life's ordeals. Arjuna inquired from Kṛṣṇa to find a solution to his dilemma, and *Bhagavad Gītā* was the outcome. From the very outset of Kṛṣṇa's instructions, the *Gītā* lays bare the root cause of distress. It then offers various remedies for it in accordance with character, temperament, and eligibility. After Arjuna heard *Bhagavad Gītā* with an open heart, his mind became stable, and he was consequently empowered to fulfill that which, by nature, training, and capability, he was truly meant to do. The *Gītā* not only solved

his immediate predicament, but also became a permanent companion on his life's sojourn.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa departed from this mortal world to return to His own eternal abode, Arjuna was once again thrown into anguish, being unable to bear separation from His dear-most friend. It is at that time that the *Gītā* came to his rescue. The verse cited above from *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa* describes how Arjuna regained his composure by remembering the message of the *Gītā*. The wisdom of the *Gītā* is timeless, and hence the solution it offers is universal in scope. By applying its teachings in one's life, one can attain inner peace and the serenity to face even the most challenging situations with poise.

BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

Sāra-samanvitā

Sanskrit Text with English Translation and
Summary

SATYANARAYANA DASA



Jiva Institute of
Vaishnava Studies
Vrindavan

Bhagavad Gītā: Sāra-samanvitā
Translation and Summary: Satyanarayana Dasa

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Cover Folk painting Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Gītā Upadeśa

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INTRODUCTION

Bhagavad Gītā is an ancient text that was spoken by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to His friend Arjuna more than 5000 years ago. They both belonged to a society that adhered to the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, a system based on social duties prescribed by the Vedas¹ and Smṛtis.² Thus, some of the terminology used here may seem archaic and unfamiliar to the modern mind. The knowledge and instructions given, however, being of a universal nature, are highly relevant even today.

Bhagavad Gītā is not an independent book. It forms a small part of *Mahābhārata*, the greatest epic of the world. The latter was written by sage Veda Vyāsa primarily for people who were considered ineligible to study the Vedas. To study the Vedas in former times, it was a requirement that one had to belong to the first three social classes (the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, and *vaiśyas*) of the *varṇāśrama* society.³ *Mahābhārata* contains the same essential knowledge as found in the Vedas but in a simplified manner through the use of elaborate stories. It narrates the history of the famous dynasties of India. There were two major dynasties, namely, the Sun dynasty and the Moon dynasty. In *Bhagavad Gītā*, the focus is on two groups of cousins, the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas, who appeared in the Moon dynasty.

The Kauravas were the one hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was blind since birth. Duryodhana was his eldest son. The Pāṇḍavas were the five sons of Pāṇḍu, who died while they were still very young. Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu were brothers. Pāṇḍu had been the king of Hastināpura, the capital city of the Kaurava kingdom, but after his untimely death, his blind

brother assumed the throne. Duryodhana did not want his cousin Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍava brothers and the legal heir, to inherit the kingdom. He tried to kill the Pāṇḍavas in different ways, but they survived by the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

At a later point, when Yudhiṣṭhira grew up to be a young man, Dhṛtarāṣṭra gave him a small part of the kingdom, and thus Yudhiṣṭhira became a king. He was a highly righteous and moral king who became very famous and opulent. His brothers and subjects loved him dearly. When Duryodhana saw this opulence and popularity, he became extremely envious of Yudhiṣṭhira. He convinced his father, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, to invite Yudhiṣṭhira to a gambling match with the Kauravas. Yudhiṣṭhira, being very respectful and obedient to his uncle, consented. Duryodhana employed the assistance of his maternal uncle, Śakuni, who was an expert in gambling, to cheat Yudhiṣṭhira and win over his kingdom. Duryodhana later agreed to return the kingdom to Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers on the condition that they spend twelve years in the forest and then one year *incognito*.

After fulfilling the condition successfully, the Pāṇḍavas demanded their kingdom from Duryodhana, in accordance with his promise, but Duryodhana refused to return even an inch of land. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa tried to negotiate a truce between the cousins, but Duryodhana was adamant. He proudly declared that the Pāṇḍavas could take their share only by defeating him in war. Thus, war was inevitable unless the Pāṇḍavas agreed to return to the forest. Being *kṣatriyas*, or warriors, the Pāṇḍavas considered it their duty to fight for the cause of justice. They sought permission from their mother, Kuntī, and accepted the challenge. Both the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas then prepared themselves for the war.

Before the war began, sage Vyāsa spoke to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the blind king of Hastināpura for whom he had great affection. He told him, “I foresee that the war and massacre of the *kṣatriyas* are inevitable. If you want to witness the scene on the battlefield, I can endow you with divine vision, so you can behold the war from the place where you are sitting.” Dhṛtarāṣṭra replied, “I have been blind all my life. I don’t want to see my own kith and kin being killed now. But I would like to hear the details of the battle.” Sage Vyāsa replied, “I will endow Sañjaya, your secretary and advisor, with divine vision by which he will know, hear, and see not only the incidents of the battlefield, but also the thoughts of the warriors. He will narrate them to you.” Sage Vyāsa then bestowed divine vision upon Sañjaya.

The war began on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra at the appointed hour. Sañjaya was there. On the tenth day, Bhīṣma, the commander of the Kauravas and granduncle of both the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas, was badly wounded by arrows and fell to the ground. Sañjaya then left Kurukṣetra to convey the news to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was in Hastināpura. Hearing the news, Dhṛtarāṣṭra was filled with great sorrow and started weeping. He then requested Sañjaya to recount to him every detail of the war. This narration begins in the thirteenth chapter of the *Bhīṣma-parva*, a section of *Mahābhārata*, and continues up to the twenty-fourth chapter. In the beginning of the twenty-fifth chapter, Dhṛtarāṣṭra asks Sañjaya to narrate the war from its very inception. This inquiry is the opening verse of the *Gītā*.

-
1. The oldest and most authoritative Hindu sacred texts, believed to be revealed by God. They are the *Ṛg Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, and *Atharva Veda*.
 2. A body of sacred literature composed to supplement the Vedas. It includes the *Dharma-śāstras* (such as the *Manu-saṁhitā*), the *Purāṇas*, and the *Itihāsas* (*Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*).
 3. “Women, laborers, and the unqualified descendants of the twice-born have no access to the Vedas. Therefore, the sage Vyāsa mercifully compiled *Mahābhārata*” (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 1.4.25). “On the pretext of writing *Mahābhārata*, Śrīla Vyāsa has explained the meaning of the Vedas. Without a doubt, all the ideas of the Vedas are given a firm foundation in the *Purāṇas*” (verse from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* cited in *Tattva Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 15).

ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

Bhagavad Gītā has eighteen chapters, and each is designated as a type of *yoga*. The word *yoga* has many different meanings. In the *Gītā* it is used principally in the sense of the means undertaken to accomplish or to be united with one's goal. Therefore, the word *yoga* can also be translated as "path," as has been done here especially in the chapter titles. There are primarily three different types of *yoga*, namely, *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *bhakti-yoga*. When we employ *karma*, or selfless action, for uniting with or reaching our goal, it is called *karma-yoga*. Similarly, when we cultivate *jñāna*, or the intuitive insight of our conscious identity with the Absolute, it is called *jñāna-yoga*. When *bhakti*, or devotion, is adopted as the means of attaining unity in love, it is called *bhakti-yoga*. In the case of the latter, *bhakti* is not only the means but also the goal.

The eighteen chapters of the *Gītā* can be grouped into three sets of six chapters each. The first set focuses predominantly on *karma-yoga*, the second set on *bhakti-yoga*, and the third on *jñāna-yoga*. But to some extent all three topics can be found throughout all the chapters. The first chapter is introductory and doesn't outline any specific *yoga*. It is titled "The Path through Despondency" (*Viṣāda-yoga*), because it describes Arjuna's dejected mental-emotional state after he surveys the armies on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. It can be considered as a *yoga*, or transformational means, only in the sense that dejection itself, when it leads to self-inquiry, becomes the basis of authentic practice. In the state of dejection, one's ordinary absorption in materialistic pursuits is slackened, and thus deliberation on God becomes a distinct possibility.

In Chapter 2, the main topic is *sāṅkhya-yoga*, a type of analytic *jñāna-yoga*. This chapter is interspersed with instructions on *karma-yoga*. Chapter 3 deals mainly with *karma-yoga*. Chapter 4 describes *karma-yoga* culminating in *jñāna-yoga*, and Chapter 5 explains how the end result of *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* is the same; thus, the wise person sees no difference between them.

Chapter 6 mainly delineates *dhyāna-yoga*, popularly known as *rāja-yoga*, although there is also some description of *karma-yoga* in the beginning. *Dhyāna-yoga*, which can be subsumed under *jñāna-yoga*, is the *yoga* of meditation. In *Bhagavad Gītā*, both *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* are described as combined with *bhakti-yoga*. This is a special feature of the *Gītā*, that it describes every *yoga* as interpenetrated by *bhakti-yoga*. Thus, the first six chapters of the *Gītā* focus more on *karma-yoga*.

The second six chapters offer an elaborate exposition of *bhakti-yoga*. In Chapter 7, Kṛṣṇa explains that He is the source of the cosmos and that everything manifests from Him. Those who surrender to Him can transcend the bondage of the material world. Consequently, a person who is truly wise takes shelter of Him, knowing that everything is a manifestation of Him. In Chapter 8, Kṛṣṇa explains the process of attaining liberation through meditation on His sound representation in the form of Om. He also speaks of the path of darkness, which leads to heaven, and the path of light, which culminates in liberation.

In Chapter 9, He resumes the topic of His manifestation in the material cosmos, which He began in Chapter 7. He concludes the chapter with the recommendation to adhere to the path of *bhakti*. In Chapter 10, He describes the process of meditation on the phenomenal objects of His majesty as manifest in the universe. In Chapter 11, there is the account of Kṛṣṇa's

revelation of His cosmic form to Arjuna. Chapter 12 is spoken in response to Arjuna's question as to which form of meditation is superior — on the unqualified Absolute or on the Absolute qualified by form. From this starting point, Kṛṣṇa goes on to explain the process of *bhakti* and describes the characteristics of His devotees.

In the last group of six chapters, it is predominantly *jñāna-yoga* that is described. Chapter 13 defines the psycho-somatic organism as a field (*kṣetra*) and consciousness as the knower of the field (*kṣetrajña*). Kṛṣṇa also explains that He is the real knower of all fields whatsoever, and that everything in this material world is the combination of matter and consciousness. Chapter 14 describes the three *guṇas*¹ of primordial nature. Chapter 15 describes the Supreme Person in His feature of immanence. Chapter 16 describes both the divine and ungodly attributes that are born of conditional nature. Chapter 17 explains the three divisions of faith, food, sacrifice (*yajña*), charity, and penance, all in accordance with the *guṇas* of nature. In Chapter 18, the final chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa provides a summary and the final conclusion of His teachings. Although this chapter refers to all three *yogas*, it ends with a strong recommendation in favor of *bhakti-yoga*.

1. Matter in its most subtle and primordial state is called *prakṛti*. It consists of three constituents called *guṇas*. These are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The three *guṇas* are always intermixed and existent in all the evolutes of *prakṛti*.

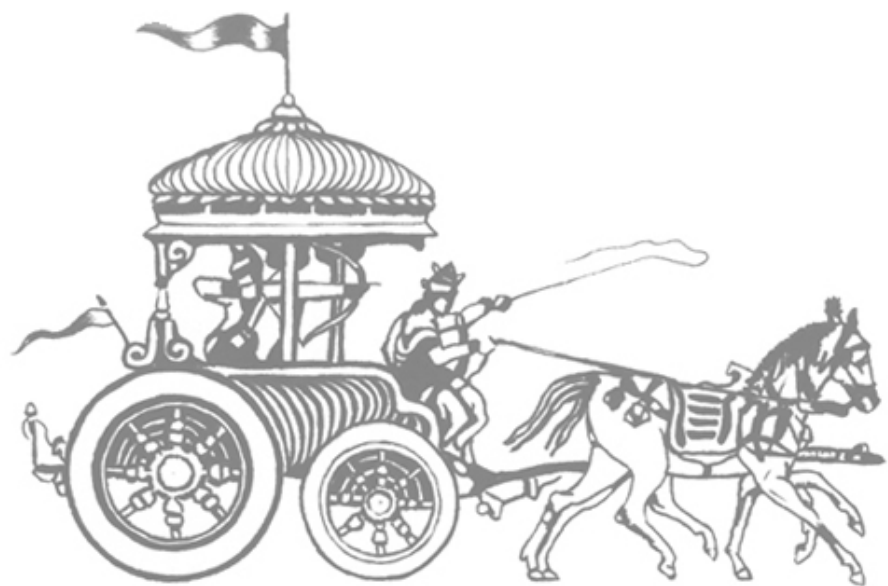
EDITORS' NOTE

In translating Sanskrit works of poetry or verse into their prose form, the traditional system employed was to first rearrange the words of a verse into their proper syntactical order, which would necessarily be different from the sequential order of the words composing the verse. This syntactical reconstruction is known as *anvaya*. In the grammatical lexicon, *A Dictionary of Sanskrit Grammar*, *anvaya* is defined as, “the arrangement of words according to their mutual relationship based upon the sense conveyed by them” (*śabdānāṃ parasparam arthānugamanam*). Monier Williams gives it as, “the natural order or connection of words in a sentence; syntax.” From this it is clear that *anvaya* is meant to convey something more than individual sequential word meaning, which is simply not designed to show the syntactical connection between the words. In reality, it is the sentence as an indivisible whole that conveys meaning, and, hence, the precise sense of the words that make up that sentence really only emerges through careful analysis of their mutual relations. Taking all of this into consideration, we have followed the traditional system for representing the *anvaya*, in accordance with sentence syntax and not according to the sequence of the words as they appear in a verse.

In the *anvaya*, words that have been inserted by the editors to complete the intended meaning of a word or compound have been placed in square brackets. These insertions are of two kinds. The first, which is more standard, is when the bracketed text is included within the English translation of a Sanskrit word or compound. For example: “*yataṭaḥ* — who is striving [for liberation].” The second type of bracketed text is employed

when a word is inserted on its own, between Sanskrit words, to help complete the overall sentence meaning. For example: “*labdhvā*—[and] on the attainment; *jñānam*—[of such] wisdom; [that person]; *acireṇa*—immediately; *adhigacchati*—obtains.” In this selection, the bracketed text, “[that person],” has been inserted into the *anvaya* to preserve the continuity of sentence meaning. Since all Sanskrit words in the *anvaya*, together with their translations, are separated by semi-colons, we have followed the same convention and placed a semi-colon even after these bracketed text insertions. In traditional texts, oftentimes the missing Sanskrit word is provided along with its translation within the brackets.

In preparing both the *anvaya* and the translation for the *Gītā*, the commentaries of Śrīdhara Svāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura have been carefully consulted.



CHAPTER 1

THE PATH THROUGH ARJUNA'S DESPONDENCY

ARJUNA-VIṢĀDA-YOGA

There are forty-seven verses in this chapter. One is spoken by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, twenty-one by Arjuna, and twenty-five by Sañjaya. Dhṛtarāṣṭra opens with the following question, “O Sañjaya, assembled on the holy land of Kurukṣetra eager to fight, what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do?” (1)¹ In reply, Sañjaya begins describing the scene of the battlefield at Kurukṣetra on the first day (2). The armies of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas are arrayed against each other. Duryodhana sees the army of the Pāṇḍavas and approaches his teacher, Droṇa. He introduces to Droṇa the great warriors of the Pāṇḍavas (3–6). He then speaks about the men of his own army and concludes that, besides the seven heroes he names, there are numerous others ready to sacrifice their lives for his sake (7–9). He claims that in comparison to the army of the Pāṇḍavas, protected by Bhīma, his own army is immeasurable in strength, being guarded by Bhīṣma. He requests his men to guard their position and protect Bhīṣma from all sides. Upon hearing this, Bhīṣma roars like a lion and blows his powerful conch to signal the commencement of the battle. All the great heroes follow and blow their respective conches and various musical instruments (10–17). The terrifying sound of the Pāṇḍavas' conches is very frightening to the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra because the hearts of unrighteous people are full of fear.

The next verses describe the actions of Arjuna. Arjuna asks his dear friend Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is driving his chariot, to place it in the midst of both armies so that he can see with whom he has

to fight. As Kṛṣṇa complies, Arjuna realizes that the enemies he has to kill are his own relatives (18–27). He is overwhelmed with feelings of pity and sorrow. Arjuna describes his mental state to Kṛṣṇa and argues against fighting. He tells Kṛṣṇa, “I do not foresee any good in slaying my kith and kin.” He points out that he does not want to regain the kingdom by killing his relatives. This would implicate him in sin, and he would have to suffer in hell as a consequence. He considers war an irreligious act which will destroy family traditions, pollute the women in the family, and be the cause of producing *varṇa-saṅkara* (illegitimate progeny who would not be inclined to follow traditional principles). Sañjaya concludes the chapter by informing Dhṛtarāṣṭra that Arjuna was so grief-stricken that he cast aside his bow and arrows and sat down in the back of the chariot (28–47).

The first chapter thus sets the stage for Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s teachings to Arjuna. Arjuna represents the neophyte spiritual seeker. Seeing both armies while being situated in the midst of them signifies evaluating one’s strengths and weaknesses. The journey along the spiritual path is like a war against one’s own attachments and weaknesses. Kṛṣṇa is the teacher. Without the guidance of a qualified teacher, one will not reach the desired destination. Out of attachment to one’s body, one loses one’s sense of discrimination and is unable to decide which actions are appropriate. One rationalizes attachments because one does not want to give them up. Attachments make one weak, vulnerable, confused, pitiable, and sorrowful. If, however, this despondent condition leads to authentic inquiry, it becomes the basis of transformation. It is significant, therefore, that this chapter has been entitled *Viṣāda-yoga*, “The Path through Despondency.”

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

*dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva kim akurvata sañjaya*

dhṛtarāṣṭraḥ uvāca—King Dhṛtarāṣṭra said; *sañjaya*—O Sañjaya; *samavetāḥ*—having assembled; *dharma-kṣetre*—in the land of *dharma*; *kuru-kṣetre*—in the land of King Kuru known as Kurukṣetra; *yuyutsavaḥ*—desiring to fight; *kim*—what; *māmakāḥ*—[did] my sons; *ca*—and; *pāṇḍavāḥ*—the sons of King Pāṇḍu; *eva*—thereafter; *akurvata*—do.

King Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O Sañjaya, having assembled in the holy land of Kurukṣetra eager to fight, what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do? (1.1)

sañjaya uvāca

*dr̥ṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṁ vyūḍhaṁ duryodhanas tadā
ācāryam upasaṅgamyā rājā vacanam abravīt*

sañjayaḥ uvāca—Sañjaya said; *tadā tu*—at that time; *dr̥ṣṭvā*—upon seeing; *pāṇḍava-anīkaṁ*—the army of the Pāṇḍavas; *vyūḍham*—arranged for battle; *rājā duryodhanaḥ*—King Duryodhana; *upasaṅgamyā*—approaching; *ācāryam*—[his] teacher [Droṇa]; *abravīt*—spoke; *vacanam*—the following words.

Sañjaya said: At that time, upon seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas arrayed for battle, King Duryodhana, approaching his teacher Droṇa, spoke the following words. (1.2)

*paśyaitāṁ pāṇḍu-putrāṇāṁ ācārya mahatīm camūṁ
vyūḍhāṁ drupada-putreṇa tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā*

ācārya—O teacher; *paśya*—behold; *etām*—this; *mahatīm*—great; *camūm*—army; *pāṇḍu-putrāṇām*—of the sons of King Pāṇḍu; *vyūḍhām*—arranged for battle; *tava*—[by] your; *dhīmatā*—intelligent; *śiṣyeṇa*—student; *drupada-putreṇa*—the son of King Drupada.

O teacher, behold the great army of the sons of King Pāṇḍu arrayed for battle by your intelligent student [Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna], the son of King Drupada. (1.3)

*atra śūrā maheṣv-āsā bhīmārjuna-samā yudhi
yuyudhāno virāṭaś ca drupadaś ca mahā-rathaḥ
dhr̥ṣṭaketuś cekitānaḥ kāśirājaś ca vīryavān
puruḥjit kuntibhojaś ca śaibyaś ca nara-puṅgavaḥ
yudhāmanyuś ca vikrānta uttamaujāś ca vīryavān
saubhadro draupadeyāś ca sarva eva mahā-rathāḥ*

atra—here [in this army]; *śūrāḥ*—[there are] heroes; *mahā-iṣu-āsāḥ*—carrying mighty bows; [such as]; *yuyudhānaḥ*—Yuyudhāna [Sātyaki]; *ca*—and; *virāṭaḥ*—Virāṭa; *ca*—and; *mahā-rathaḥ*—the great chariot fighter; *drupadaḥ*—Drupada; *samāḥ*—[who are] equal; *yudhi*—in fighting; *bhīma-arjuna*—to Bhīma and Arjuna; *dhr̥ṣṭaketuḥ*—[there are] Dhr̥ṣṭaketu; *cekitānaḥ*—Cekitāna; *ca*—and; *vīryavān*—the powerful; *kāśirājaḥ*—King of Kāśi; *ca*—[there are] also; *puruḥjit*—Puruḥjit; *kuntibhojaḥ*—Kuntibhoja; *ca*—and; *śaibyaḥ*—Śaibya; *nara-puṅgavaḥ*—the best among men; *ca*—[there are] also; *vikrāntaḥ*—the mighty; *yudhāmanyuḥ*—Yudhāmanyu; *vīryavān*—the valiant; *uttamaujāḥ*—Uttamaujā; *ca*—and; *saubhadraḥ*—the son of Subhadra [Abhimanyu]; *ca*—and [there are]; *draupadeyāḥ*—the sons of Draupadī; *sarve eva*—[who are] all indeed; *mahā-rathāḥ*—great chariot fighters.

In this army, there are heroes carrying mighty bows, such as Sātyaki and Virāṭa and the great chariot fighter Drupada, who are equal in prowess to Bhīma and Arjuna. There are Dhr̥ṣṭaketu, Cekitāna, and the powerful King of Kāśi. There are also Purujit, Kuntībhoja, and Śaibya, the best among men. There are also the mighty Yudhāmanyu, the valiant Uttamaujā, and the son of Subhadrā [Abhimanyu]. And there are the five sons of Draupadī, who are all indeed great chariot fighters. (1.4–6)

*asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye tān nibodha dvijottama
nāyakā mama sainyasya sañjñārthaṁ tān bravāmi te*

dvija-uttama — O best of the brāhmaṇas; *nibodha* — please be informed; *tu* — however; *tān* — of those; *ye* — who; *viśiṣṭāḥ* — [are] distinguished [warriors]; *asmākaṁ* — of ours; *nāyakāḥ* — the generals; *mama sainyasya* — of my army; *sañjñā-arthaṁ* — for your information; *bravāmi* — I shall describe; *tān* — them; *te* — to you.

O best of the *dvijas* (twice-born),² please be informed, however, of those who are distinguished warriors on our side, the generals of my army. For your information, I will describe them to you. (1.7)

*bhavān bhīṣmaś ca karṇaś ca kṛpaś ca samitiñjayaḥ
aśvatthāmā vikarṇaś ca saumadattis tathaiva ca*

[there are]; *bhavān* — yourself; *bhīṣmaḥ ca* — Bhīṣma; *karṇaḥ ca* — Karṇa; *kṛpaḥ ca* — Kṛpa; *samitim-jayaḥ* — who is the winner of battles; *aśvatthāmā* — Aśvatthāmā; *vikarṇaḥ ca* — Vikarṇa; *tathā eva ca* — and indeed; *saumadattiḥ* — the son of Somadatta [Bhūriśravā].

[There are] Yourself, Bhīṣma, Karṇa, Kṛpa, who is the winner of battles, Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa, and indeed Bhūriśravā, who is the son of Somadatta. (1.8)

*anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā mad-arthe tyakta-jīvitāḥ
nānā-śastra-praharaṇāḥ sarve yuddha-viśāradāḥ*

ca — [there are] also; *bahavaḥ* — many; *anye* — other; *śūrāḥ* — chivalrous men; *praharaṇāḥ* — wielding; *nānā* — many; *śastra* — weapons; *sarve* — all of them; *yuddha-viśāradāḥ* — skilled in the art of fighting; *tyakta-jīvitāḥ* — who have staked their lives; *mat-arthe* — for my sake.

There are also many other chivalrous men wielding various types of weapons, all skilled in the art of fighting, who have staked their lives for my sake. (1.9)

*aparyāptam tad asmākaṁ balam bhīṣmābhirakṣitam
paryāptam tv idam eteṣāṁ balam bhīmābhirakṣitam*

tat — that; *balam* — strength; *asmākaṁ* — of ours; *abhirakṣitam* — well protected; *bhīṣma* — by Bhīṣma; *aparyāptam* — [is] immeasurable;³ *tu* — whereas; *idam* — this; *balam* — strength; *eteṣāṁ* — of theirs [the Pāṇḍavas]; *abhirakṣitam* — fully protected; *bhīma* — by Bhīma; *paryāptam* — [is] limited [or, alternatively, is sufficient].

The strength of our army, well protected by Bhīṣma, is immeasurable, whereas the strength of their army, fully protected by Bhīma, is limited. (1.10)

*ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathā-bhāgam avasthitāḥ
bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi*

avasthitāḥ — situated; *yathā-bhāgam* — as assigned; *sarveṣu* — at all; *ayaneṣu ca* — points of entry into the formation; *sarve eva hi bhavantāḥ* — all of you indeed; *abhirakṣantu* — must protect on all sides; *bhīṣmam eva* — Bhīṣma alone.

[To his army, Duryodhana then said:] Therefore, situated in your assigned places at all points of entry into the formation, all of you indeed must protect Bhīṣma alone on all sides. (1.11)

*tasya sañjanayan harṣaṁ kuru-vṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ
simha-nādaṁ vinadyoccaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau pratāpavān*

kuru-vṛddhaḥ — the senior leader of the Kuru dynasty; *pratāpavān* — the powerful or valiant; *pitāmahaḥ* — grandfather Bhīṣma; *sañjanayan* — arousing; *tasya* — his [Duryodhana's]; *harṣam* — cheerfulness; *vinadya* — [and] roaring; *uccaiḥ* — loudly; *simha-nādam* — like the sound of a lion; *dadhmau* — blew; *śaṅkham* — [his] conchshell.

[Sañjaya said:] The senior leader of the Kuru dynasty, the valiant grandfather Bhīṣma, cheering him [Duryodhana] on, roared loudly like a lion and blew his conch. (1.12)

*tataḥ śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca paṇavānaka-gomukhāḥ
sahasaivābhyahanyanta sa śabdāḥ tumulo 'bhavat*

tataḥ — thereafter; *śaṅkhāḥ* — conchshells; *ca* — and; *bheryaḥ* — kettledrums; *paṇava-ānaka* — small and big drums; *ca* — and; *go-mukhāḥ* — trumpets; *sahasā eva* — all of a sudden; *abhyahanyanta* — were simultaneously sounded; *saḥ* — that; *śabdāḥ* — sound; *abhavat* — was; *tumulaḥ* — tumultuous.

Thereafter, conches, kettledrums, small and big drums, and trumpets suddenly sounded forth. That noise was tumultuous. (1.13)

*tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte mahati syandane sthitau
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaś caiva divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ*

tataḥ — then; *mādhavaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *ca* — and; *pāṇḍavaḥ* — Arjuna (the son of Pāṇḍu); *sthitau* — seated; *mahati* — in a magnificent; *syandane* — chariot; *yukte* — that was yoked; *śvetaiḥ* — with white; *hayaiḥ* — horses; *pradadhmatuḥ* — blew; *divyau eva* — [their utterly] divine; *śaṅkhau* — conchshells.

Then, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, seated on a magnificent chariot yoked with white horses, blew their divine conches. (1.14)

*pāñcajanyaṁ hr̥ṣīkeśo devadattaṁ dhanañjayaḥ
pauṇḍraṁ dadhmau mahā-śaṅkhaṁ bhīma-karmā vṛkodarah*

hr̥ṣīka-īśaḥ — Kṛṣṇa; *dadhmau* — blew; *pāñcajanyaṁ* — [His] conchshell called Pāñcajanya; *ghanam-jayaḥ* — Arjuna; *devadattaṁ* — [blew his] conchshell called Devadatta; *vṛka-udarah* — [and] Bhīma; *bhīma-karmā* — who performs Herculean tasks; *mahā-śaṅkham* — [blew his] mighty conch; *pauṇḍram* — called Pauṇḍra.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa blew His conch named Pāñcajanya, Arjuna blew his conch Devadatta, and Bhīma, the performer of Herculean tasks, blew his mighty conch Pauṇḍra. (1.15)

*anantavijayaṁ rājā kuntī-putro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
nakulaḥ sahadewaś ca sughoṣa-manipuṣpakau*

rājā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ — King Yudhiṣṭhira; *kuntī-putraḥ* — the son of Kuntī; *ananta-vijayam* — [blew] the conch called Ananta-vijaya; [while]; *nakulaḥ* — Nakula; *ca* — and; *sahadevaḥ* — Sahadeva; *sughoṣa-manipuṣpakau* — [blew] the conches called Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka.

King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kuntī, blew his conch Ananta-vijaya, while Nakula and Sahadeva blew Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka, respectively. (1.16)

*kāśyaś ca parameṣv-āsaḥ śikhaṇḍī ca mahā-rathaḥ
dhr̥ṣṭadyumno virāṭaś ca sātyakiś cāparājitaḥ
drupado draupadeyāś ca sarvaśaḥ pṛthivī-pate
saubhadraś ca mahā-bāhuḥ śaṅkhān dadhmuḥ pṛthak pṛthak*

kāśyaḥ — the King of Kāśī [Vārāṇasī or Benares]; *parama-iṣu-āsaḥ* — who wielded a mighty bow; *ca* — and; *śikhaṇḍī* — Śikhaṇḍī; *mahā-rathaḥ* — the great chariot fighter; *ca* — as well as; *dhr̥ṣṭadyumnaḥ* — Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna [the son of King Drupada]; *ca* — and; *virāṭaḥ* — Virāṭa; *ca* — and; *aparājitaḥ* — the invincible; *sātyakiḥ* — Sātyaki [also known as Yuyudhāna]; *drupadaḥ* — Drupada, the King of Pāñcāla; *ca* — and; *draupadeyāḥ* — the five sons of Draupadī; *ca* — and; *mahā-bāhuḥ* — the mighty-armed; *saubhadraḥ* — Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra; *sarvaśaḥ* — all; *dadhmuḥ* — blew; *pṛthak pṛthak* — their respective; *śaṅkhān* — conchshells; *pṛthivī-pate* — O Emperor of the earth.

The King of Kāśī, who wielded a mighty bow, and Śikhaṇḍī, the great chariot fighter, as well as Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna and Virāṭa, the invincible Sātyaki, Drupada, the five sons of Draupadī, and the mighty-armed Abhimanyu, son of Subhadra, all blew their respective conches, O Emperor of the earth. (1.17–18)

*sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām hṛdayāni vyadārayat
nabhaś ca pṛthivīm caiva tumulo 'bhyanunādayan*

saḥ — that; *tumulaḥ* — terrifying; *ghoṣaḥ* — sound; *abhyanunādayan* — resounding; *nabhaḥ ca* — [through] the sky; *pṛthivīm ca eva* — and indeed the earth; *vyadārayat* — shattered; *hṛdayāni* — the hearts; *dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām* — of the sons and supporters of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

That terrifying sound, resounding through sky and earth, shattered the hearts of your sons and supporters. (1.19)

*atha vyavasthitān dṛṣṭvā dhārtarāṣṭrān kapi-dhvajaḥ
pravṛtte śastra-sampāte dhanur udyamya pāṇḍavaḥ
hr̥ṣīkeśam tadā vākyam idam āha mahī-pate*

atha — then; *mahī-pate* — O Emperor [Dhṛtarāṣṭra]; *dṛṣṭvā* — seeing; *dhārtarāṣṭrān* — your sons and supporters; *vyavasthitān* — arrayed for battle; *pāṇḍavaḥ* — the son of Pāṇḍu [Arjuna]; *kapi-dhvajaḥ* — whose flag bears the symbol of Hanumān; *udyamya* — taking up; *dhanuḥ* — [his] bow; *pravṛtte* — in preparation; *śastra-sampāte* — to wield his weapons; *tadā* — at that time; *āha* — spoke; *idam* — these; *vākyam* — words; *hr̥ṣīkeśam* — unto Kṛṣṇa.

Then, O Emperor, seeing your sons and supporters arrayed for battle, Arjuna, the son of Pāṇḍu, whose flag bears the symbol of Hanumān, took up his bow in preparation to shoot arrows and at that time addressed Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the following words. (1.20–21a)⁴

*arjuna uvāca
senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthāpaya me 'cyuta*

*yāvad etān nirīkṣe 'haṁ yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān
kair mayā saha yoddhavyam asmin raṇa-samudyame*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna said; *acyuta* — O Acyuta (infallible one); *sthāpaya* — place; *me* — my; *ratham* — chariot; *madhye* — between; *ubhayoḥ* — both; *senayoḥ* — of the armies; [so that]; *aham* — I; *nirīkṣe* — may observe; *yāvat* — for as long as required; *etān* — all these; *yoddhu-kāmān* — warriors desiring to fight; *avasthitān* — arrayed on the battlefield; *kaiḥ saha* — with whom; *yoddhavyam* — there is a necessity to fight; *mayā* — by me; *asmin* — in this; *samudyame* — enterprise; *raṇa* — of war.

Arjuna said: O Acyuta, place my chariot between the two armies, so I can carefully observe all these warriors desiring to fight, who are arrayed on the battlefield and with whom I must contend in this enterprise of war. (1.21b–22)

*yotsyamānān avekṣe 'haṁ ya ete 'tra samāgatāḥ
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher yuddhe priya-cikīrṣavaḥ*

aham — I; *avekṣe* — shall observe; *ete* — those; *ye* — who; *samāgatāḥ* — have assembled; *atra* — here; *yuddhe* — for this battle; *yotsyamānān* — ready to fight; *cikīrṣavaḥ* — [and] wishing; *priya* — to be pleasing; *durbuddheḥ* — for the evil-minded; *dhārtarāṣṭrasya* — son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

I shall observe those who have assembled here for this battle, ready to fight and wishing to please the evil-minded son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Duryodhana. (1.23)

*sañjaya uvāca
evam ukto hr̥ṣīkeśo guḍākeśena bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye sthāpayitvā rathottamam*

*bhīṣma-droṇa-pramukhataḥ sarveṣāṃ ca mahī-kṣitām
uvāca pārtha paśyaitān samavetān kurūn iti*

sañjayaḥ uvāca—Sañjaya said; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata; *evam*—thus; *uktaḥ*—addressed; *guḍākeśena*—by Arjuna; *hṛṣīkeśaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa; *sthāpayitvā*—placing; *ratha-uttamam*—the magnificent chariot; *madhye*—in the midst; *ubhayoḥ*—of both; *senayoḥ*—of the armies; *pramukhataḥ*—facing; *bhīṣma*—Bhīṣma; *droṇa*—Droṇa; *ca*—and; *sarveṣāṃ*—all; *mahī-kṣitām*—the rulers of the earth; *uvāca*—said; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *paśya*—behold; *etān*—these; *kurūn*—Kauravas [the members of the Kuru dynasty]; *samavetān*—assembled [here].

Sañjaya said: O descendant of Bharata, thus addressed by Guḍākeśa (Arjuna), Hṛṣīkeśa (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) placed the magnificent chariot between the two armies, facing Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and all the rulers of the earth, and said, “O Pārtha (Arjuna), behold these Kauravas assembled here.” (1.24–25)

*tatrāpaśyat sthitān pārthaḥ pitṛn atha pitāmahān
ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn putrān pautrān sakhīns tathā
śvaśūrān suhṛdaś caiva senayor ubhayor api*

atha—thereafter; *pārthaḥ*—Arjuna; *api*—also; *apaśyat*—saw; *sthitān*—present; *tatra*—there; *ubhayoḥ*—in the midst of both; *senayoḥ*—of the armies; *pitṛn*—[his] fathers [i.e., paternal uncles];⁵ *pitāmahān*—grandfathers; *ācāryān*—teachers; *mātulān*—maternal uncles; *bhrātṛn*—brothers [and cousins]; *putrān*—sons [and nephews]; *pautrān*—grandsons [and grandnephews]; *sakhīn*—friends; *tathā*—and; *śvaśūrān*—fathers-in-law; *ca eva*—and indeed; *suhṛdaḥ*—well-wishers.

Thereafter, Arjuna also saw present there in the midst of both the armies his paternal uncles, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers and cousins, sons and nephews, grandsons and grandnephews, friends, fathers-in-law, and well-wishers. (1.26–27a)⁶

*tān samīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ sarvān bandhūn avasthitān
kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo viśīdann idam abravīt*

saḥ — he; *kaunteyaḥ* — the son of Kuntī; *samīkṣya* — upon seeing; *sarvān* — all; *tān* — these; *bandhūn* — relatives; *avasthitān* — present [on the battlefield]; *āviṣṭaḥ* — became overwhelmed; *parayā* — with deep; *kṛpayā* — compassion; *viśīdan* — [and] while grieving; *abravīt* — spoke; *idam* — this.

The son of Kuntī, seeing all these relatives present on the battlefield, became overwhelmed with deep compassion, and while grieving spoke the following words. (1.27b–28a)⁷

arjuna uvāca
dr̥ṣṭvemaṁ sva-janaṁ kṛṣṇa yuyutsum samupasthitam
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukhaṁ ca pariśuṣyati
vepathuś ca śarīre me roma-harṣaś ca jāyate

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna said; *kṛṣṇa* — O Kṛṣṇa; *dr̥ṣṭvā* — upon seeing; *imam* — these; *sva-janam* — kinsmen; *samupasthitam* — present here; *yuyutsum* — desiring to fight; *mama* — my; *gātrāṇi* — limbs of the body; *sīdanti* — are numb; *ca* — and; *mukham* — [my] mouth; *pariśuṣyati* — is parched; *ca* — and; *vepathuḥ* — there is trembling; *me* — in my; *śarīre* — body; *ca* — and; *roma-harṣaḥ* — standing of the hairs on end; *jāyate* — is taking place.

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, seeing these kinsmen present here, desiring to fight, my limbs are becoming numb and my

mouth is parched. My body is trembling, and the hairs on my body are standing on end. (1.28b–29)

*gāṇḍīvaṁ sraṁsate hastāt tvak caiva paridahyate
na ca śaknomy avasthātum bhramatīva ca me manaḥ*

gāṇḍīvaṁ — my [Arjuna's] bow called Gāṇḍīva; *sraṁsate* — slips; *hastāt* — from my hand; *ca* — and; *tvak* — [my] skin; *paridahyate* — is indeed burning all over; *ca* — additionally; *na śaknomi* — I am unable; *avasthātum* — to stand; *ca* — and; *me* — my; *manaḥ* — mind; *bhramati iva* — is as if reeling.

My bow Gāṇḍīva slips from my hand, and my skin indeed burns all over. I am unable to stand properly and my mind appears to be reeling. (1.30)

*nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni keśava
na ca śreyo 'nupaśyāmi hatvā sva-janam āhave*

keśava — O Kṛṣṇa; *paśyāmi* — I see; *ca* — also; *viparītāni* — adverse; *nimittāni* — omens; *ca* — and; *na anupaśyāmi* — I do not foresee; *śreyaḥ* — any good; *hatvā* — by killing; *sva-janam* — my kinsmen; *āhave* — in battle.

O Keśava, I also see adverse omens, and I do not foresee any good by killing my kinsmen in battle. (1.31)

*na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca
kiṁ no rājyena govinda kiṁ bhogair jīvitena vā*

na kāṅkṣe — I do not covet; *vijayaṁ* — victory; *kṛṣṇa* — O Kṛṣṇa; *na ca* — neither; *rājyaṁ* — empire; *ca* — nor; *sukhāni* — enjoyments; *govinda* — O Kṛṣṇa; *kiṁ* — of what use is there; *naḥ* — to us; *rājyena* — through means of empire; *kiṁ* — of what use

is there; *bhogaiḥ* — through means of luxuries; *vā* — or even; *jīvitena* — through life itself.

I do not covet victory, Kṛṣṇa, nor empire, nor enjoyments. O Govinda, of what avail to us is a kingdom? Of what use are luxuries or even life itself? (1.32)

*yeṣāṃ arthe kāṅkṣitaṃ no rājyaṃ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca
ta ime 'vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāṃs tyaktvā dhanāni ca
ācāryāḥ pitaraḥ putrāḥ tathaiḥ ca pitāmahāḥ
mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinas tathā*

yeṣāṃ arthe — those for whose sake; *rājyaṃ* — the empire; *bhogāḥ* — luxuries; *ca* — and; *sukhāni* — enjoyments; *kāṅkṣitaṃ* — are coveted; *naḥ* — by us; *ācāryāḥ* — [our] teachers; *pitaraḥ* — fathers [i.e., paternal uncles]; *putrāḥ* — sons [and nephews]; *tathā eva ca* — as well as; *pitāmahāḥ* — grandfathers; *mātulāḥ* — maternal uncles; *śvaśurāḥ* — fathers-in-law; *pautrāḥ* — grandsons [and grandnephews]; *śyālāḥ* — brothers-in-law; *tathā* — and other; *sambandhinaḥ* — relatives; *te ime* — all these; *avasthitāḥ* — are stationed here; *yuddhe* — on the battlefield; *tyaktvā* — staking; *prāṇān* — [their] lives; *ca* — and; *dhanāni* — wealth.

Those very persons for whose sake we covet the empire, luxuries, and enjoyments — our teachers, paternal uncles, sons, and nephews, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons and grandnephews, brothers-in-law, and other relatives — are stationed here on the battlefield, staking their lives and wealth. (1.33–34)

*etān na hantum icchāmi ghnato 'pi madhusūdana
api trailokya-rājyasya hetoḥ kiṃ nu mahī-kṛte*

api—even if; *ghnataḥ*—[I am] being killed [by them]; *madhusūdana*—Kṛṣṇa; *na icchāmi*—I do not want; *hantum*—to kill; *etān*—them; *api*—even; *hetoḥ*—for the sake; *rājyasya*—of dominion; *trai-lokya*—of the three worlds; *kim nu*—what to speak of; *mahī-kṛte*—for sovereignty over the earth.

Even if I am to be killed by them, O Madhusūdana, I do not wish to kill them, even for dominion over the three worlds, let alone sovereignty over the earth. (1.35)

*nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ kā prītiḥ syāj janārdana
pāpam evāśrayed asmān hatvaitān ātatāyinaḥ*

janārdana—Kṛṣṇa; *kā*—what; *prītiḥ*—pleasure; *syāt*—will there be; *naḥ*—for us; *nihatya*—by killing; *dhārtarāṣṭrān*—the sons and followers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *pāpam*—sin; *eva*—alone; *āśrayet*—will be incurred; *asmān*—[by] us; *hatvā*—by killing; *etān*—these; *ātatāyinaḥ*—aggressors.

O Janārdana, what pleasure would we obtain by slaying the sons and followers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra? We would incur only sin by killing these aggressors. (1.36)

*tasmān nārḥā vayam hantum dhārtarāṣṭrān sva-bāndhavān
sva-janam hi katham hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma mādharma*

tasmāt—therefore; *na arḥāḥ*—[it] does not behoove; *vayam*—us; *hantum*—to kill; *dhārtarāṣṭrān*—the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *sva-bāndhavān*—our own relatives; *mādhava*—O Kṛṣṇa; *katham*—how; *hi*—indeed; *syāma*—will we be; *sukhinaḥ*—happy; *hatvā*—by killing; *sva-janam*—our own kinsmen.

Therefore, it does not behoove us to kill the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, our own relatives. O Mādhava, how indeed could

we be happy after killing our own kinsmen? (1.37)

*yady apy ete na paśyanti lobhopahata-cetasah
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ mitra-drohe ca pātakam
kathaṁ na jñeyam asmābhiḥ pāpād asmān nivartitum
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ prapaśyadbhir janārdana*

api — even; *yadi* — though; *ete* — they; *cetasah* — their minds; *upahata* — overpowered; *lobha* — [by] greed; *na paśyanti* — do not see; *doṣam* — the evil; *kula-kṣaya-kṛtam* — in the destruction of the family; *ca* — and; *pātakam* — the sin; *mitra-drohe* — in treason to friends; *katham* — why; *na jñeyam* — should it not be known; *asmābhiḥ* — by us; *janārdana* — O Kṛṣṇa; *prapaśyadbhiḥ* — who see clearly; *doṣam* — the evil; *kula-kṣaya-kṛtam* — in the destruction of the family; *nivartitum* — to refrain; *asmāt* — from this; *pāpāt* — sin.

Even though they, their minds overpowered by greed, see no evil in destroying their own family and no sin in treason to friends, why should we, O Janārdana, who see clearly the evil of destroying one's family, not know to avoid this sin? (1.38–39)

*kula-kṣaye praṇaśyanti kula-dharmāḥ sanātanāḥ
dharme naṣṭe kulam kṛtsnam adharmo 'bhibhavaty uta*

kula-kṣaye — on the destruction of the family; *sanātanāḥ* — the ancient; *kula-dharmāḥ* — family traditions; *praṇaśyanti* — are lost; *uta* — and; *naṣṭe* — on the destruction; *dharme* — of family traditions; *adharmāḥ* — irreligiosity; *abhibhavati* — overwhelms; *kṛtsnam* — the entire; *kulam* — family.

When the family is destroyed, the ancient family traditions are lost, and from the loss of family traditions, irreligiosity

(adharmā)⁸ overwhelms the entire family. (1.40)

***adharmābhibhavāt kṛṣṇa praduṣyanti kula-striyaḥ
strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ***

abhibhavāt—from the prevalence; *adharmā*—of irreligion; *kṛṣṇa*—O Kṛṣṇa; *vārṣṇeya*—O descendant of Vṛṣṇi; *kula-striyaḥ*—the women in the family; *praduṣyanti*—become corrupt; *strīṣu*—[and] when the women; *duṣṭāsu*—become corrupt; *varṇa-saṅkaraḥ*—the intermingling of social classes (*varṇa*); *jāyate*—arises.

With the prevalence of irreligion, O Kṛṣṇa, descendant of Vṛṣṇi, the women in the family become corrupt, and with the corruption of women, the intermingling of social classes arises. (1.41)

***saṅkaro narakāyaiva kula-ghnānām kulasya ca
patanti pitaro hy eṣām lupta-piṇḍodaka-kriyāḥ***

saṅkaraḥ—the intermingling [of social classes]; *narakāya*—results in hell; *eva*—only; *kula-ghnānām*—for the destroyers of the family; *ca*—and; *kulasya*—for the family itself; *eṣām*—their; *pitaraḥ*—ancestors; *patanti*—fall down; *hi*—certainly; *lupta*—being deprived; *kriyāḥ*—[of] the ceremonies; *piṇḍa*—of offering rice; *udaka*—[and] water.

The intermingling of social classes results only in hell for the destroyers of the family as well as for the family itself. Their ancestors certainly also glide down, being deprived of the ceremonial offerings of rice and water.⁹ (1.42)

*doṣair etaiḥ kula-ghnānām varṇa-saṅkara-kāraḱaiḥ
utsādyante jāti-dharmāḥ kula-dharmāś ca śāśvatāḥ*

etaiḥ—by these; *doṣaiḥ*—evils; *kāraḱaiḥ*—which are the causes; *kula-ghnānām*—of the destruction of the family; *varṇa-saṅkara*—[and] of the intermingling of social classes; *śāśvatāḥ*—the ancient; *jāti-dharmāḥ*—traditions of social order; *ca*—and; *kula-dharmāḥ*—family traditions; *utsādyante*—become extinct.

By these evils, which destroy families and lead to the intermingling of social classes, the ancient traditions of social order (*jāti*) and family traditions become extinct. (1.43)

*utsanna-kula-dharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām janārdana
narake niyatam vāso bhavatīty anuśuśrūma*

iti anuśuśrūma—we have heard thus from traditional sources; *janārdana*—O Kṛṣṇa; *manuṣyāṇām*—[that] for men; *kula-dharmāṇām*—whose family traditions; *utsanna*—have been abolished; *vāsaḥ*—residence; *narake*—in hell; *niyatam*—for an indefinite period; *bhavati*—occurs.

We have heard from traditional sources, O Janārdana, that those whose family traditions have been abolished reside in hell for an indefinite period. (1.44)

*aho bata mahat pāpaṁ kartum vyavasitā vayam
yad rājya-sukha-lobhena hantum sva-janam udyatāḥ*

aho bata—alas; *vayam*—we; *vyavasitāḥ*—have resolved; *kartum*—to perform; *mahat*—a great; *pāpam*—sin; *yat*—because; *ayam*—we; *udyatāḥ*—are intent upon; *hantum*—

killing; *sva-janam* — our own kinsmen; *lobhena* — due to greed; *rājya* — for royal; *sukha* — pleasure.

Alas, we have resolved to commit a great sin, because we are intent upon killing our own kinsmen out of greed for the pleasure of royalty. (1.45)

*yadi mām apratīkāram aśastram śastra-pāṇayaḥ
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyus tan me kṣemataram bhavet*

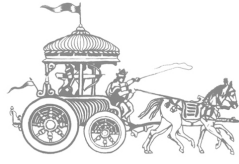
tat — that; *bhavet* — would be; *kṣema-taram* — better; *me* — for me; *yadi* — if; *raṇe* — in the battle; *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ* — the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *śastra-pāṇayaḥ* — with weapons in hand; *hanyuḥ* — were to kill; *mām* — me; *aśastram* — unarmed; *apratīkāram* — [and] unresisting.

It would be better for me if, in the battle, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra with weapons in their hands, killed me, unarmed and unresisting. (1.46)

*sañjaya uvāca
evam uktvārjunah saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat
visṛjya sa-śaram cāpam śoka-saṁvigna-mānasaḥ*

sañjayaḥ uvāca — Sañjaya said; *uktvā* — having spoken; *evam* — thus; *saṅkhye* — on the battlefield; *arjunah* — Arjuna; *mānasaḥ* — whose mind; *saṁvigna* — was distressed; *śoka* — with grief; *visṛjya* — having cast away; *cāpam* — [his] bow; *sa-śaram* — along with arrows; *upāviśat* — sat down; *upasthe* — on the rear seat; *ratha* — of the chariot.

Sañjaya said: Having spoken thus on the battlefield, Arjuna, whose mind was distressed by grief, cast away his bow and arrows, and sank down into the rear of his chariot. (1.47)



1. Numbers in parentheses refer to verse numbers.

2. In *varṇāśrama* society, the first three *varṇas* undergo a religious ceremony called *upanayana-saṁskāra*. It marks the beginning of scriptural study and is considered as taking a second birth from the teacher who performs the ceremony. The first birth is from one's mother.

3. This word can also mean “insufficient.”

4. The third of these three lines and the first from the following three lines make up verse number 21. Verse 21 has been split up to make a complete sentence. The same should be understood in other instances where a verse has been split up.

5. Since Arjuna's own father had passed away long before the battle of Kurukṣetra, the plural *pitṛn*, “fathers,” here refers to paternal uncles, which in Indian family relations would be taken as nearly equivalent to the birth father. The same criterion applies to the translation of *pitṛn* in verses 1.33–34.

6. The last of these three lines and the first line of the following two lines make verse number 27.

7. The second of these two lines and the first of the following three lines make verse number 28.

8. *Adharma* is the opposite of *dharma*, which means prescribed duty, or the sphere of action and behavior—in consonance with individual nature—that one is meant to enact to be in perfect harmony with the complete whole.

9. This refers to the ritual of *śrāddha* and *tarpaṇa* for the departed ancestors called *pitṛs*. Such an offering by the descendants sustains the *pitṛs* in the heavenly abode called *pitṛ-loka*. In return they bless their descendants. The progeny born

from illegitimate intermingling of classes are disqualified to perform the ceremonies of *śrāddha* and *tarpaṇa*.

CHAPTER 2

THE PATH OF ANALYTIC KNOWLEDGE

SĀṆKHYA-YOGA

The second chapter begins with Sañjaya's description of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's response upon observing Arjuna overwhelmed with grief. This chapter has seventy-two verses, three spoken by Sañjaya, eight by Arjuna, and sixty-one by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. First, Kṛṣṇa expresses surprise on witnessing Arjuna's cowardly behavior. He shows no sympathy and commands Arjuna to rise and shake off his petty faint-heartedness (1–3). Arjuna defends his stance, saying, "It is better to live on alms in this world than to kill those great honorable men, because even after killing them, all my enjoyments here in the form of wealth and sense pleasures would be stained with their blood" (4–5). Although Arjuna declines to fight, he is evidently not very sure of his own decision. Seeing that Kṛṣṇa is not supportive of his unwillingness to fight and instead ridicules him, his mind becomes filled with doubt (6). He surrenders to Kṛṣṇa and asks Him to become his teacher (7). Ironically, immediately following his submission, Arjuna declares his determination not to fight (9).

Kṛṣṇa begins His instructions by first repudiating Arjuna for making a show of wisdom while yet overwhelmed by sorrow (11). Kṛṣṇa first clarifies that the body and the self are entirely distinct from each other. The body is transitory, limited, and perishable, while the self is eternal, real, and imperishable. Therefore, one should neither lament the destruction of the perishable nor aspire to maintain the imperishable—this is discernment. Discernment is needed in all three disciplines

(*yogas*) of action, knowledge, and devotion. When a person distinguishes between the self and the body, the desire for liberation (freedom from material bondage) is aroused. Even the desire for heaven assumes the knowledge of the difference between the self, which endures, and the physical body, which perishes. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa begins His instructions with a discussion of discernment, a topic that continues through verse 30.

Instead of using philosophical terminology, Kṛṣṇa uses simple words to enable people to understand the topic easily. The idea is that every person deserves the opportunity to realize God, because the human form has been bestowed upon us specifically for this purpose, which is the utter fulfillment of the self's potential as an eternal conscious entity. Therefore, every human being can realize God by first understanding the importance of discernment.

In this section, the term “intellect” has not been used by Kṛṣṇa. In order to distinguish the real from the unreal, the imperishable from the perishable, the eternal from the transitory, and the self (spirit) from the body, discernment is all that is necessary. As both *prakṛti* (nature) and *puruṣa* (spirit) are beginningless (as Kṛṣṇa teaches in Chapter 13, verses 19–20), so is the faculty of discernment, which distinguishes the real from the unreal. Discernment has been bestowed upon all creatures by God and is revealed in the intellect. Even birds and beasts know instinctively what should and should not be eaten by them and can distinguish between heat and cold, yet they are devoid of discernment in the matter of spiritual intelligence. Human beings are especially endowed with this discernment, which can release them from the bondage of birth and death and lead them to eternal peace and bliss (liberation). When discernment is aroused, enabling

individuals to distinguish between the self and the body, they renounce their affinity for the transitory objects of this world, including the senses, the mind, and the intellect. As a consequence, their intellect becomes purified and balanced.

After completing His exposition on the nature of the self, Kṛṣṇa tries to convince Arjuna to participate in the battle, because that is his duty as a *kṣatriya*. He argues that if Arjuna does not fight, his enemies will ridicule him. Thus, even for the sake of his honor, he should fight with a balanced state of mind (31–38).

Later in the chapter, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “I have spoken this wisdom to you in relation to *sāṅkhya-yoga* [the path of detachment based upon the discernment between the body and self]. Now hear the same in relation to *karma-yoga* [the path of selfless action offered to God]. Equipped with wisdom, you will be able to completely relinquish the shackles of *karma*” (39). In the discipline of action, the intelligence is fixed on a single goal (41). When people firmly resolve to attain liberation, favorable or unfavorable circumstances cause no obstacles, and thus they attain equanimity. When people resolve to attain realization of God, their attachment and attraction to the world begin to disappear. Attachment to pleasures, power, and prosperity is the main obstacle to the attainment of mental resolution (44). The problem is not with objects, power, prosperity, or relations, but with the attachment to them. Therefore, these things are not to be shunned in and of themselves, but the attachment to them should be. This theme is repeated throughout *Bhagavad Gītā*.

Having emphasized stability of mind in the discipline of action, Kṛṣṇa requests Arjuna to perform his duty with evenness of mind. He declares, “Your eligibility pertains

exclusively to the fulfillment of action, but never to the fruits thereof. Do not become the cause of the results of your actions [by claiming independent doership] nor, as a consequence, should you be attached to the non-performance of action (47). Perform your duties being steadfast in *yoga*” (48). Kṛṣṇa also declares that action performed for its fruits is inferior to the *yoga* of wisdom: “Duty performed with motive is verily far inferior to this *yoga* of wisdom (i.e., *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*). Take refuge in this wisdom. Those who act for results are pitiable” (49). He then declares, “Being endowed with this equanimity of mind, one abandons in this life both pious and impious deeds. Therefore, strive for *yoga*. *Yoga* [or equanimity in selfless action] is dexterity in the execution of action” (50). The essence of these verses is that one should be mindful of one’s actions and not be attached to the result and its aftermath.

It should be noted that in *jñāna-yoga*, discrimination between the body and self is predominant; in *bhakti-yoga*, surrender and faith are predominant; while in *karma-yoga*, resolute intellect is predominant. Arjuna then asks about the characteristics of a person of resolute intellect: How does such a person function in the world and how does he act when he is alone (54)? Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s reply to Arjuna’s question makes up the remainder of the chapter (55–72).

Kṛṣṇa explains that when a person’s mind becomes free of all material desires, the intellect becomes fixed. One who meditates on sense objects becomes attached to them, which leads to the desire to attain them, which further results in anger. Anger makes one deluded, resulting in loss of memory, which destroys one’s intelligence. Following such a course, a person is utterly ruined. Kṛṣṇa lays great stress on control of the senses. A person who has mastered his senses is like an ocean that remains within its bounds in spite of being filled by

the numerous rivers that enter it. Such a person attains supreme peace and freedom from bondage to material nature.

sañjaya uvāca

*tam tathā kṛpayāviṣṭam aśru-pūrṇākulekṣaṇam
viṣīdantam idam vākyam uvāca madhusūdanaḥ*

sañjayaḥ uvāca — Sañjaya said; *madhusūdanaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *uvāca* — spoke; *idam* — these; *vākyam* — words; *tam* — to him [Arjuna]; *viṣīdantam* — who was despairing; *tathā āviṣṭam* — being thus overcome; *kṛpayā* — by pity; *īkṣaṇam* — [with] eyes; *aśru-pūrṇa* — full of tears; *ākula* — [and] grief.

Sañjaya said: Madhusūdana spoke the following words to Arjuna, who was despairing, being thus overcome by pity, with eyes full of tears and grief. (2.1)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*kutas tvā kaśmālam idam viṣame samupasthitam
anārya-juṣṭam asvargyam akīrti-karam arjuna*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *arjuna* — Arjuna; *kutaḥ* — wherefrom; *idam* — [has] this; *kaśmālam* — impurity; *samupasthitam* — befallen; *tvā* — you; *viṣame* — at such a critical moment; *juṣṭam* — it is befitting; *anārya* — the ignoble; *asvargyam* — it is unconducive to the attainment of heaven; *karam* — [and] it is the cause; *akīrti* — of social disgrace.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Arjuna, how has this impurity [dejection] befallen you at such a critical moment? It is unbecoming a person of nobility, unconducive to the attainment of heaven, and it leads to social disgrace. (2.2)

*klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitat tvayy upapadyate
kṣudraṁ hṛdaya-daurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa*

mā sma—do not; *gamaḥ*—go to [i.e., yield to]; *klaibyam*—impotency; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; *etat*—this; *na upapadyate*—is not befitting; *tvayi*—for you; *tyaktvā*—cast away; *kṣudram*—[this] petty; *daurbalyam*—weakness; *hṛdaya*—of heart; *parantapa*—O scorcher of the enemies [Arjuna]; *uttiṣṭha*—[and] arise [for battle].

Yield not to impotency, O Pārtha (Arjuna), it does not behoove you. Cast away this petty weak-heartedness, O scorcher of enemies (Parantapa), and arise for battle. (2.3)

arjuna uvāca

*katham bhīṣmam aham saṅkhye droṇam ca madhusūdana
iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi pūjārḥāv ari-sūdana*

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *ari-sūdana*—O destroyer of enemies (Kṛṣṇa); *madhusūdana*—Kṛṣṇa; *katham*—how; *aham*—[shall] I; *pratiyotsyāmi*—counterattack; *iṣubhiḥ*—with arrows; *saṅkhye*—in the battle; *bhīṣmam*—Bhīṣma; *ca*—and; *droṇam*—Droṇa; *pūjā-arḥau*—who are worthy of worship.

Arjuna said: O destroyer of enemies, Madhusūdana, how shall I counterattack with arrows in battle, Bhīṣma and Droṇa, who are worthy of my worship? (2.4)

gurūn ahatvā hi mahānubhāvān

śreyo bhoktum bhaikṣyam apīha loke

hatvārtha-kāmāms tu gurūn ihaiva

bhuñjīya bhogān rudhira-pradigdhān

śreyaḥ—it would be better; *bhoktum*—to eat [i.e., to live]; *iha loke*—in this world; *bhaikṣyam api*—even by begging; *ahatvā*—without killing; *hi*—indeed; *gurūn*—[those] honorable; *mahā-anubhāvān*—[and] wise men; *tu*—otherwise; *hatvā*—by

killing; *gurūn* — our honorable superiors; *bhogān* — the objects of enjoyment; *artha* — [such as] wealth; *kāmān* — [and] coveted items; *bhuñjīya* — that we will be obliged to partake of; *iha eva* — in this world; *pradigdhān* — will be stained; *rudhira* — with blood.

It would be better to live in this world even by begging alms without killing those honorable and wise men. Otherwise, by killing our superiors, the wealth and coveted items of enjoyment that we will partake of in this world will surely be tainted with their blood. (2.5)

*na caitad vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo
yad vā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas
te 'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ*

na ca vidmaḥ — and we do not know; *etat* — this; *katarat* — which option; *garīyaḥ* — would be better; *naḥ* — for us; *yat vā* — whether; *jayema* — to conquer; *yadi vā* — or whether; *naḥ* — for us; *jayeyuḥ* — to be conquered; *te* — those; *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ* — sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *yān eva* — whom indeed; *hatvā* — if we were to kill; *na jijīviṣāmaḥ* — we would not wish to live; *avasthitāḥ* — are standing now; *pramukhe* — directly in front of us.

And we do not know which would be better for us — whether to conquer them or for them to conquer us. Those very sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, whom if we killed we would not wish to live, are standing now directly in front of us. (2.6)

*kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ
pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharma-sammūḍha-cetāḥ*

*yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me
śiṣyas te 'haṁ sādhi mām tvām prapannam*

svabhāvaḥ —[my] nature; *upahata* —being overpowered; *doṣa* —[by the] defect; *kārpaṇya* —[of] weakness of heart; *cetāḥ* —[and my] mind; *sammūḍha* —being confused; *dharma* —[about] duty; *prcchāmi* —I ask; *tvām* —You; *brūhi* —to tell me; *niścitaṁ* —decisively; *tat* —that; *yat* —which; *syāt* —will be; *śreyaḥ* —most beneficial; *me* —for me; *aham* —I [am]; *te* —Your; *śiṣyaḥ* —disciple; *prapannam* —[and] have taken refuge; *tvām* —in You; *sādhi* —please instruct; *mām* —me.

My nature being overpowered by the defect of weakness of heart and my mind being confused about my duty, I ask You to please tell me decisively which course of action is most beneficial for me. I am Your disciple and have taken refuge in You. Please instruct me. (2.7)

*na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād
yac chokam ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām
avāpya bhūmāv asapatnam ṛddham
rājyaṁ surāṇām api cādhipatyam*

avāpya —[even if] obtaining; *asapatnam* —an unrivalled; *ṛddham* —[and] prosperous; *rājyam* —kingdom; *bhūmau* —on earth; *ca* —and; *api* —even; *ādhipatyam* —sovereignty; *surāṇām* —over the gods; *na hi prapaśyāmi* —I cannot at all see; *yat* —[that] which; *apanudyāt* —could drive away; *śokam* —this grief; *ucchoṣaṇam* —[which is] drying up or afflicting; *mama* —my; *indriyāṇām* —senses.

Indeed, even if we obtain an unrivalled and prosperous kingdom on this earth and even sovereignty over the *suras*

(gods), I cannot at all see that which might drive away this grief which is afflicting my senses. (2.8)

sañjaya uvāca
evam uktvā hr̥ṣīkeśam guḍākeśaḥ parantapaḥ
na yotsya iti govindam uktvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha

sañjayaḥ uvāca — Sañjaya said; *uktvā* — having spoken; *evam* — thus; *hr̥ṣīkeśam* — to Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses; *guḍākeśaḥ* — Arjuna, the master of curbing ignorance; *parantapaḥ* — [and] the scorcher of enemies; *uktvā* — speaking; *iti* — thus; *govindam* — to Kṛṣṇa; *na yotsye* — “I shall not fight;” *babhūva* — became; *ha* — decidedly; *tūṣṇīm* — silent.

Sañjaya said: After speaking thus to Hṛṣīkeśa, Guḍākeśa, the scorcher of enemies, said to Govinda, “I will not fight,” and became silent. (2.9)

tam uvāca hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ prahasann iva bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye viṣīdantam idam vacaḥ

bhārata — O Dhṛtarāṣṭra, descendant of Bharata; [then]; *hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *prahasann iva* — as if smiling; *uvāca* — spoke; *idam* — the following; *vacaḥ* — words; *tam* — to him [Arjuna]; *viṣīdantam* — the grieving one; *madhye* — in the midst; *ubhayor* — of both; *senayor* — of the armies.

O descendant of Bharata, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as if smiling, spoke the following words to the grieving Arjuna in the midst of both armies. (2.10)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
aśocyān anvaśocas tvam prajñā-vādāmś ca bhāṣase

gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *tvam* — you; *anvaśocaḥ* — are grieving; *aśocyān* — for those not worthy of grief; *ca* — and yet; *bhāṣase* — speaking; *prajñā-vādān* — as though learned; *paṇḍitāḥ* — the wise; *na anuśocanti* — do not lament; *gatāsūn* — for those devoid of life air, the dead; *ca* — and; *agatāsūn* — for those having life air, the living.

Śrī Bhagavān said: You are grieving for those who are unworthy of grief, and yet speaking as though learned. Those who are truly wise lament neither for the dead nor for the living. (2.11)

*na tv evāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ na tvam neme janādhīpāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayam ataḥ param*

tu — but; *na eva* — it is not at all the case; [that]; *jātu* — at any time whatsoever; *aham* — I; *na āsam* — did not exist; *na* — nor; *tvam* — you; *na* — nor; *ime* — these; *jana-adhipāḥ* — kings; *na ca eva* — and neither indeed is it the case; *ataḥ param* — that hereafter; *sarve vayam* — all of us; *na bhaviṣyāmaḥ* — shall not exist.

There was never a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor any of these kings. Nor in the future shall any of us cease to exist. (2.12)

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati*

yathā — just as; *kaumāram* — childhood; *yauvanam* — youth; *jarā* — [and] old age; *asmin* — pertain to this; *dehe* — body; *dehinaḥ* — of the embodied self; *tathā* — similarly; *prāptiḥ* —

there is attainment; *deha-antara*—[of] another body [after death]; *dhīraḥ*—a wise person; *na muhyati*—is not bewildered; *tatra*—by this.

Just as childhood, youth, and old age pertain only to the body of the embodied self, so also the self attains another body [after death]. A wise person is not bewildered by this. (2.13)

*mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ
āgamāpāyino 'nityās tāṁs titikṣasva bhārata*

kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; *mātrā-sparśāḥ*—the contact of the senses [with their objects]; *tu*—certainly; *dāḥ*—is a producer; *śīta*—[of feelings of] cold; *uṣṇa*—[and] heat; *sukha*—[of] happiness; *duḥkha*—[and] misery; *anityāḥ*—[they are] transitory; *āgama*—coming; *apāyinaḥ*—[and] going; [therefore]; *bhārata*—O descendant of the Bharata dynasty; *titikṣasva*—you should tolerate; *tān*—them.

O son of Kuntī, the contact of the senses with their objects generates feelings of heat and cold, happiness and misery. They are transitory, having a beginning and an end. Therefore, O descendant of Bharata, tolerate them. (2.14)

*yam hi na vyathayanty ete puruṣaṁ puruṣarṣabha
sama-duḥkha-sukhaṁ dhīraṁ so 'mṛtatvāya kalpate*

puruṣa-rṣabha—O best of men; *dhīram*—for a wise; *puruṣam*—person; *sama*—who is equal; *duḥkha*—in pain; *sukham*—[and] in pleasure; *yam*—for whom; *ete*—these [sense contacts]; *na*—do not; *vyathayanti*—cause disturbance; *saḥ*—he; *hi*—indeed; *kalpate*—is eligible; *amṛtatvāya*—for immortality.

O best of men, the wise person who is not disturbed by these sense contacts, who is equally disposed in pleasure and pain, is certainly eligible for immortality. (2.15)

*nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ
ubhayor api dr̥ṣṭo 'ntas tv anayos tattva-darśibhiḥ*

na vidyate—there is no; *bhāvaḥ*—existence; *asataḥ*—of the unreal; *na vidyate*—nor is there; *abhāvaḥ*—non-existence; *sataḥ*—of the real; *antaḥ*—the conclusion; *anayoḥ ubhayoḥ*—regarding both of these; *api*—verily; *dr̥ṣṭaḥ*—is directly apperceived; *tu*—indeed; *darśibhiḥ*—by seers; *tattva*—of the truth.

The unreal has no existence, and the real never ceases to exist. The conclusion regarding these two [principles] has been directly apperceived by seers of the truth. (2.16)

*avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
vināśam avyayasyāśya na kaścit kartum arhati*

tat—that; *tu*—however; *yena*—by which; *idaṁ*—this; *sarvam*—entire body; *tatam*—is pervaded; *viddhi*—you should know; *avināśi*—to be indestructible; *na kaścit*—no one; *arhati*—is able; *kartum*—to bring about; *vināśam*—the destruction; *asya*—of this; *avyayasya*—imperishable [self].

That, however, by which this entire body is pervaded you should know to be indestructible. Nobody can destroy this imperishable [self]. (2.17)

*antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ
anāśino 'prameyasya tasmād yudhyasva bhārata*

ime—all these; *dehāḥ*—bodies; *nityasya*—of the eternal; *anāśinaḥ*—imperishable; *aprameyasya*—[and] immeasurable; *śarīriṇaḥ*—embodied self; *uktāḥ*—are said; *antavantaḥ*—[to be] that which have an end; *tasmāt*—therefore; *yudhyasva*—fight; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata.

All these bodies of the eternal, imperishable, and immeasurable embodied [self] are said to have an end. Therefore, O descendant of Bharata, fight! (2.18)

*ya enam vetti hantāram yaś cainam manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyam hanti na hanyate*

yaḥ—one who; *vetti*—considers; *enam*—this [the self]; *hantāram*—as a slayer; *ca*—and; *yaḥ*—one who; *manyate*—believes; *enam*—this [self]; *hatam*—as slain; *ubhau*—both; *tau*—of them; *na*—are not; *vijānītaḥ*—in knowledge; [because]; *ayam*—this [the self]; *na hanti*—does not slay; *na hanyate*—nor is slain.

One who considers the self to be the slayer, and one who believes it to be slain, are both ignorant, for the self neither slays nor is slain. (2.19)

*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin nāyam bhūtvā bhavitā vā na
bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yam purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*

ayam—this [the self]; *na kadācit*—never; *jāyate*—takes birth; *vā*—or; *mriyate*—dies; *bhūtvā vā*—or having come into being; *na bhavitā*—it will not become; *bhūyaḥ*—again; *ayam*—this [the self]; *ajaḥ*—[is] birthless; *nityaḥ*—eternal; *śāśvataḥ*—changeless; *purāṇaḥ*—[and] primordial; *hanyamāne*—on the

destruction; *śarīre* — of the body; *na hanyate* — [the self] is not killed.

The self never takes birth, nor does it die, nor having once come into being will it ever be subject to further becoming. It is birthless, eternal, changeless, and primordial. It is not killed when the body is killed. (2.20)

*vedāvināśinam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam
katham sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kam ghātayati hanti kam*

pārtha — O Pārtha (Arjuna); *katham* — how; [can]; *saḥ* — that; *puruṣaḥ* — person; *yaḥ* — who; *veda* — knows; *enam* — this [the self]; *avināśinam* — as imperishable; *nityam* — eternal; *ajam* — birthless; *avyayam* — [and] immutable; *kam ghātayati* — cause anyone to be slain; *hanti* — [or] slay; *kam* — whom.

O Arjuna, how can a person who knows the self to be imperishable, eternal, birthless, and immutable, cause anyone to be slain or kill anyone? (2.21)

*vāsāṃsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni grhṇāti naro 'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny anyāni saṃyāti navāni dehī*

yathā — just as; *naraḥ* — a man; *vihāya* — giving up; *jīrṇāni* — worn-out; *vāsāṃsi* — garments; *grhṇāti* — puts on; *aparāṇi* — other; *navāni* — new [garments]; *tathā* — in the same way; *dehī* — the embodied self; *vihāya* — casting off; *jīrṇāni* — worn-out; *śarīrāṇi* — bodies; *saṃyāti* — enters; *anyāni* — other; *navāni* — new [bodies].

As a person giving up worn-out garments puts on new ones, so the embodied self, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into other new bodies. (2.22)

*nainam chindanti śastrāṇi nainam dahati pāvakaḥ
na cainam kledayanty āpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ*

śastrāṇi—weapons; na—cannot; chindanti—cut [to pieces];
enam—this [the self]; pāvakaḥ—fire; na—cannot; dahati—
burn; enam—this [the self]; āpaḥ—water; na—cannot;
kledayanti—wet; enam—this [the self]; ca—and; mārutaḥ—
wind; na—cannot; śoṣayati—dry [it].

**Weapons cannot cut the self nor can fire burn it; water cannot
wet the self nor can wind dry it. (2.23)**

*acchedyo 'yam adāhyo 'yam akledyo 'śoṣya eva ca
nityaḥ sarva-gataḥ sthāṇur aśalo 'yam sanātanaḥ*

ayam—this [the self]; acchedyaḥ—cannot be cut; adāhyaḥ—
[and] cannot be burnt; ayam—this [the self]; akledyaḥ—
cannot be moistened; ca—and; eva—certainly; aśoṣyaḥ—
cannot be dried; ayam—this [the self]; nityaḥ—[is]
indestructible; sarva-gataḥ—omnipresent; sthāṇuḥ—stable;
aśalaḥ—immovable; sanātanaḥ—[and] eternal.

**The self cannot be cut or burnt; it cannot be moistened or
dried. It is indestructible, omnipresent, stable, immovable,
and eternal. (2.24)**

*avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam avikāryo 'yam ucyate
tasmād evam veditvainaṁ nānuśocitum arhasi*

ayam—this [the self]; ucyate—is said; avyaktaḥ—[to be]
unmanifest; ayam—this [the self]; [is said]; acintyaḥ—[to be]
inconceivable; ayam—this [the self]; [is said]; avikāryaḥ—[to
be] immutable; tasmāt—therefore; veditvā—knowing; enam—

this [the self]; *evam*—in this way; *na arhasi*—you do not deserve; *anuśocitum*—to grieve.

The self is said to be unmanifest, inconceivable, and immutable. Therefore, knowing the self in this way, you should not grieve. (2.25)

*atha cainam nitya-jātaṁ nityaṁ vā manyase mṛtaṁ
tathāpi tvam mahā-bāho nainaṁ śocitum arhasi*

atha ca—but even if; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed one; *manyase*—you consider; *enam*—this [the self]; *nitya-jātaṁ*—to be subject to constant birth; *vā*—or; *nityaṁ*—to repeated; *mṛtaṁ*—death; *tathā api*—even then; *tvam*—you; *na arhasi*—do not deserve; *śocitum*—to grieve; *enam*—on this account.

But, O mighty-armed one, if you consider the self to be subject to constant birth and death, even then, you should not grieve on this account. (2.26)

*jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca
tasmād aparihārye 'rthe na tvam śocitum arhasi*

hi—because; *jātasya*—for one who is born; *mṛtyuḥ*—death; *dhruvaḥ*—[is] certain; *ca*—and; *mṛtasya*—for one who dies; *janma*—birth; *dhruvaṁ*—[is] certain; *tasmāt*—therefore; *tvam*—you; *na arhasi*—do not deserve; *śocitum*—to grieve; *arthe*—in the matter; *aparihārye*—of the inevitable.

For one who is born, death is certain, and for one who dies, birth is certain. Therefore, you should not grieve over the inevitable. (2.27)

*avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni bhārata
avyakta-nidhanāny eva tatra kā paridevanā*

bhārata—O descendant of Bharata; *bhūtāni*—all beings; *avyakta-ādīni*—are unmanifest before birth; *vyakta*—manifest; *madhyāni*—in the interim; *avyakta*—[and] unmanifest; *nidhanāni eva*—at death indeed; *tatra*—in this matter; *kā*—what cause is there; *paridevanā*—for grief.

O descendant of Bharata, all beings are unmanifest before birth, manifest in the interim period between birth and death, and unmanifest again at death. In this matter, what is there to grieve about? (2.28)

*āścarya-vat paśyati kaścīd enam
āścarya-vad vadati tathāiva cānyaḥ
āścarya-vac cainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti
śrutvāpy enam veda na caiva kaścit*

kaścit—someone; *paśyati*—perceives [i.e., considers]; *enam*—this [the self]; *āścarya-vat*—as amazing; *ca*—and; *tathā eva*—in the same way; *anyaḥ*—another; *vadati*—speaks of it; *āścarya-vat*—as amazing; *ca*—and; *anyaḥ*—another; *śṛṇoti*—hears; *enam*—of this [the self]; *āścarya-vat*—as amazing; *ca*—while; *kaścit*—someone else; *śrutvā api*—even on having heard; *enam*—of this [the self]; *na veda eva*—does not know it at all.

Some consider the self as amazing, some speak of it as amazing, and some hear of it as amazing, while others, even after hearing of it, cannot comprehend it at all. (2.29)

*dehī nityam avadhyo 'yaṁ dehe sarvasya bhārata
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvam śocitum arhasi*

bhārata—O descendant of Bharata; *ayam*—this; *dehī*—embodied self; *dehe*—[dwelling] in the body; *sarvasya*—of everyone; *nityam*—[is] ever; *avadhyaḥ*—indestructible; *tasmāt*—therefore; *tvam*—you; *na arhasi*—do not deserve; *śocitum*—to grieve; *sarvāṇi*—for all; *bhūtāni*—living beings.

O descendant of Bharata, the embodied self, dwelling in the bodies of all living beings, is ever indestructible; therefore, you should not grieve for anyone. (2.30)

sva-dharmam api cāvekṣya na vikampitum arhasi
dharmyād dhi yuddhāc chreyo 'nyat kṣatriyasya na vidyate

api ca—moreover; *avekṣya*—considering; *sva-dharmam*—your own duty; *na arhasi*—you do not deserve; *vikampitum*—to waver; *hi*—because; *kṣatriyasya*—for a warrior; *na vidyate*—there does not exist; *anyat*—anything; *śreyah*—more beneficial; *yuddhāt*—than a battle; *dharmyāt*—that is righteous.

Moreover, considering your own duty (dharma), you should not waver, for there is nothing more beneficial for a kṣatriya than a righteous battle. (2.31)

yadṛcchayā copapannam svarga-dvāram apāvṛtam
sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha labhante yuddham īdṛśam

pārtha—O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; *sukhinaḥ*—happy; *kṣatriyāḥ*—[are] the warriors; *labhante*—who gain; *yuddham*—[an opportunity for] battle; *īdṛśam*—such as this; *upapannam*—which has arisen; *yadṛcchayā*—of its own accord [i.e., by good fortune]; *ca*—and; *apāvṛtam*—[is an] open; *dvāram*—gate; *svarga*—to heaven.

O Arjuna, happy are those kṣatriyas who gain an opportunity for battle such as this. Having arisen of its own accord, such fortune is an open gate to heaven. (2.32)

*atha cet tvam imam dharmyam saṅgrāmam na kariṣyasi
tataḥ sva-dharmam kīrtim ca hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi*

cet—if; *atha*—however; *tvam*—you; *na kariṣyasi*—do not engage; *imam*—[in] this; *dharmyam*—righteous; *saṅgrāmam*—battle; *tataḥ*—then; *hitvā*—forsaking; *sva-dharmam*—your duty; *ca*—and; *kīrtim*—reputation; *avāpsyasi*—you will incur; *pāpam*—sin.

If, however, you do not engage in this righteous battle, then forsaking your duty and reputation, you will incur sin. (2.33)

*akīrtim cāpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te 'vyayām
sambhāvitasya cākīrtir maraṇād atiricyate*

ca api—moreover; *bhūtāni*—people; *kathayiṣyanti*—will speak; *te*—of your; *akīrtim*—infamy; *avyayām*—for all time; *ca*—and; *sambhāvitasya*—for a man of honor; *akīrtiḥ*—infamy; *atiricyate*—is worse; *maraṇāt*—than death.

Moreover, people will speak of your infamy for all time to come, and for a man of honor infamy is worse than death. (2.34)

*bhayād raṇād uparataṁ maṁsyante tvāṁ mahā-rathāḥ
yeṣāṁ ca tvāṁ bahu-mato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam*

mahā-rathāḥ—the great warriors; *maṁsyante*—will consider; *tvāṁ*—you; *uparataṁ*—to have ceased [i.e., run away]; *raṇāt*—from the battlefield; *bhayāt*—out of fear; *ca*—indeed; *tvam*—

you; *yāsyasi* — will attain to; *lāghavam* — insignificance; *yeṣām* — for those for whom; *bhūtvā* — you had become; *bahu-mataḥ* — the object of great honor.

The great warriors will think that you have run away from battle out of fear. Indeed, those for whom you were so highly regarded will belittle you. (2.35)

*avācya-vādāṁś ca bahūn vadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ
nindantas tava sāmarmhyam tato duḥkhataram nu kim*

ca — and; *tava* — your; *ahitāḥ* — enemies; *nindantaḥ* — disparaging; *tava* — your; *sāmarmhyam* — prowess; *vadiṣyanti* — will speak; *bahūn* — many; *avācya* — abusive; *vādān* — words; *nu* — indeed; *kim* — what; *duḥkha-taram* — could be more painful; *tataḥ* — than this.

And your enemies, disparaging your prowess, will speak many abusive words. Indeed, what could be more painful than this? (2.36)

*hato vā prāpsyasi svargam jivā vā bhokṣyase mahīm
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛta-niścayaḥ*

hataḥ vā — if you are killed; *prāpsyasi* — you will attain; *svargam* — heaven; *jivā vā* — or if you are victorious; *bhokṣyase* — you will enjoy; *mahīm* — the earth; *tasmāt* — therefore; *uttiṣṭha* — stand up; *kaunteya* — O son of Kuntī; *kṛta-niścayaḥ* — having firmly resolved; *yuddhāya* — to fight.

If you are killed [while fighting], you will attain heaven, or if you are victorious, you will enjoy dominion over the earth. Therefore, stand up, O son of Kuntī, having firmly resolved to fight. (2.37)

*sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivam pāpam avāpsyasi*

kṛtvā — considering; *sukha* — pleasure; *duḥkhe* — [and] pain; *lābha-alābhau* — gain and loss; *jaya-ajayau* — victory and defeat; *same* — alike; *yujyasva* — be engaged; *yuddhāya* — for the sake of battle; *tataḥ* — thus; *evam* — in this way; *na avāpsyasi* — you will not incur; *pāpam* — sin.

Considering pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat alike, engage in battle. Thus, you will not incur sin. (2.38)

*eṣā te 'bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhir yoge tv imām śṛṇu
buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karma-bandham prahāsyasi*

pārtha — O son of Prthā; *abhihitā* — I have spoken; *te* — to you; *eṣā* — this; *buddhiḥ* — wisdom; *sāṅkhye* — in relation to *sāṅkhya-yoga*; *tu* — now; *śṛṇu* — hear; *imām* — this; *yoge* — in relation to *yoga* (*karma-yoga*); *yuktaḥ* — equipped; *yayā buddhyā* — with which wisdom; *prahāsyasi* — you will relinquish; *karma-bandham* — the shackles of *karma*.

O son of Prthā, I have spoken this wisdom to you in relation to *sāṅkhya-yoga* [the path of detachment based upon the discernment between the body and self]. Now hear the same in relation to *karma-yoga* [the path of selfless action offered to God]. Equipped with wisdom, you will be able to completely relinquish the shackles of *karma*. (2.39)

*nehābhikrama-nāśo 'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
sv-alpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*

iha—on this path; *na asti*—there is not; *nāśaḥ*—loss; *abhikrama*—in progress undertaken; *na vidyate*—nor is there; *pratyavāyaḥ*—any contrary result; *su-alpam api*—even a little [practice]; *asya dharmasya*—of this *dharma*; *trāyate*—protects; *mahataḥ bhayāt*—from great fear.

On this path [of *karma-yoga*], there is no loss of progress undertaken, nor is there any chance of obtaining a contrary result. Even a little practice of this *dharma* protects one from the great fear [of repeated birth and death]. (2.40)

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-śākhā hy anantāś ca buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām*

kuru-nandana—O descendant of Kuru; *iha*—here [on the path of *karma-yoga*]; *buddhiḥ*—the intellect; *vyavasāya-ātmikā*—[is] resolutely determined; *ekā*—being one-pointed; *hi*—whereas; *buddhayaḥ*—the intellectual determinations; *avyavasāyinām*—of the irresolute; *anantāḥ*—[are] innumerable; *ca*—and; *bahu-śākhāḥ*—many-branched.

O descendant of Kuru, on this path, the intellect is resolutely determined, being one-pointed in its intent, whereas the intellectual determinations of the irresolute are innumerable and many-branched. (2.41)

*yām imām puṣpitām vācam pravadyant avipaścitaḥ
veda-vāda-ratāḥ pārtha nānyad astīti vādinaḥ
kāmatmānaḥ svarga-parā janma-karma-phala-pradām
kriyā-viśeṣa-bahulāṁ bhogaiśvarya-gatiṁ prati*

pārtha—O son of Pṛthā; *avipaścitaḥ*—the unwise; *veda-vāda-ratāḥ*—who are attached to the evanescent goals described in the Vedas; *vādinaḥ iti*—who claim thus; *anyat na asti*—“there

is nothing else;” *kāma-ātmānaḥ*—who are full of material desires; *svarga-parāḥ*—[and] who are intent upon the attainment of heaven; *pravadanti*—utter; *yām imām*—these; *puṣpitām*—flowery; *vācam*—words; *kriyā-viśeṣa*—concerning special rites; *bahulām*—of various kinds; *prati*—directed toward; *gatim*—the acquisition; *bhoga*—[of] pleasure; *aiśvarya*—[and] power; *janma-karma-phala-pradām*—yielding the results of rebirth and perpetuation of the cycle of *karma*.

O Arjuna, the unwise, who are attached to the evanescent goals described in the Vedas, who claim that the Vedas are concerned with nothing other than this, who are full of material desires, and who are intent upon the attainment of heaven, utter the flowery words of the Vedas concerning various special rites that are directed toward the acquisition of pleasure and power and which result in rebirth and perpetuation of the cycle of *karma*. (2.42–2.43)

*bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānām tayāpahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate*

apahṛta-cetasām—for those whose minds are carried away; *tayā*—by such [flowery words]; *prasaktānām*—[and] for those who are firmly attached; *bhoga*—[to] pleasure; *aiśvarya*—[and] worldly powers; *buddhiḥ*—the intellect; *na vidhīyate*—does not become established; *vyavasāya-ātmikā*—resolutely; *samādhau*—in *samādhi* [transcognitive awareness of Parameśvara].

For those whose minds are carried away by such flowery words and who are firmly attached to pleasure and worldly powers, the intellect cannot become resolutely established in transcognitive awareness¹ [of Parameśvara]. (2.44)

*traī-guṇya-viṣayā vedā nīstrai-guṇyo bhavārjuna
nīrdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho nīryoga-kṣema ātmavān*

vedāḥ—the Vedas; *viṣayāḥ*—have as their primary subject; *traī-guṇya*—that which pertains to the three *guṇas*; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *bhava*—be; *nīstrai-guṇyaḥ*—free from the triad of *guṇas*; *nīrdvandvaḥ*—beyond dualities; *nīryoga-kṣemaḥ*—[and] free from concerns for acquisition and preservation; *nitya-sattva-sthaḥ*—[be] established in the eternal existence; *ātma-vān*—[and] self-situated.

The Vedas are [predominantly] concerned with the three *guṇas*. O Arjuna, be free from the triad of *guṇas*, situated beyond dualities, and free from concerns for acquisition and preservation. Become established in the eternal existence and self-situated. (2.45)

*yāvān artha udapāne sarvataḥ samplutodake
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ*

yāvān—as much; *arthaḥ*—purpose; *uda-pāne*—[as can be accomplished] in a small reservoir of water; *tāvān*—that much; *sarvataḥ*—[is] entirely [fulfilled]; *sampluta-udake*—in a large reservoir brimming with water; [similarly, as much purpose as can be accomplished]; *sarveṣu vedeṣu*—in all the Vedas; [that much is entirely fulfilled]; *vijānataḥ brāhmaṇasya*—by a self-realized *brāhmaṇa*.

Whatever purpose [can be accomplished] by a small reservoir of water is entirely [fulfilled] by a large body of water. Similarly, whatever purpose [is obtainable] through all the Vedas is entirely [fulfilled] by a self-realized *brāhmaṇa*. (2.46)

*karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi*

te — your; *adhikāraḥ* — eligibility; *karmaṇi* — pertains to action; *eva* — only; *mā kadācana* — [but] never at any time; *phaleṣu* — in the fruits; *mā* — never; *bhūḥ* — become; *hetuḥ* — the cause; *karma-phala* — of the results of action; *mā* — never; *astu* — let there be; *te* — your; *saṅgaḥ* — attachment; *akarmaṇi* — in the non-performance of action.

Your eligibility pertains exclusively to the fulfillment of action,² but never to the fruits thereof. Do not become the cause of the results of your actions [by claiming independent doership]³ nor, as a consequence, should you be attached to the non-performance of action. (2.47)

*yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā dhanañjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvam yoga ucyate*

dhanam-jaya — O Arjuna; *kuru* — perform; *karmāṇi* — your duties; *yoga-sthaḥ* — being situated in yoga; *tyaktvā* — while giving up; *saṅgam* — attachment [for the fruit]; *bhūtvā* — [and] remaining; *samaḥ* — equipoised; *siddhi-asiddhyoḥ* — in success and failure; *samatvam* — this equanimity; *ucyate* — is called; *yogaḥ* — yoga.

O Dhanañjaya, perform your duties, being steadfast in yoga, while renouncing desire for the fruits and remaining equipoised in success and failure. This equanimity of mind is called yoga. (2.48)

*dūreṇa hy avaraṇ karma buddhi-yogād dhanañjaya
buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phala-hetavaḥ*

dhanam-jaya—O Arjuna; *karma*—action performed with motive; *dūreṇa avaram*—[is] far inferior; *hi*—verily; *buddhi-yogāt*—to the *yoga* of wisdom; *anviccha*—take; *śaraṇam*—refuge; *buddhau*—in this wisdom; *phala-hetavaḥ*—those who act for results; *kṛpaṇāḥ*—[are] pitiable.

O Dhanañjaya, action performed with motive is verily far inferior to this *yoga* of wisdom [*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*]. Take refuge in this wisdom. Those who act for results are pitiable. (2.49)

*buddhi-yukto jahātīha ubhe sukrta-duṣkrte
tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*

buddhi-yuktaḥ—being endowed with wisdom [equanimity of mind]; *jahāti*—one abandons; *iha*—in this life; *ubhe*—both; *sukrta-duṣkrte*—pious and impious deeds; *tasmāt*—therefore; *yujyasva*—strive; *yogāya*—for *yoga*; *yogaḥ*—the *yoga* of equanimity; *kauśalam*—[is] dexterity; *karmasu*—in action.

Being endowed with equanimity of mind, one abandons in this life both pious and impious deeds. Therefore, strive for *yoga* [*niṣkāma-karma*]. The *yoga* of equanimity is dexterity inaction.⁴ (2.50)

*karma-jaṁ buddhi-yuktā hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ
janma-bandha-vinirmuktāḥ padaṁ gacchanty anāmayam*

hi—because; *manīṣiṇaḥ*—the wise; *buddhi-yuktāḥ*—who are endowed with this wisdom; *tyaktvā*—having renounced; *phalam*—the fruits; *karma-jaṁ*—born of actions; *vinirmuktāḥ*—are thus freed; *janma-bandha*—[from] the shackles of birth; *gacchanti*—they attain; *padam*—the state; *anāmayam*—[of] freedom from misery.

Because the wise, who are endowed with this wisdom [of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*], having renounced the fruits born of their actions, are thus freed from the shackles of birth, they attain the state beyond all misery. (2.51)

*yadā te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitariṣyati
tadā gantāsi nirvedam śrotavyasya śrutasya ca*

yadā — when; *te* — your; *buddhiḥ* — intellect; *vyatitariṣyati* — will cross over; *kalilam* — the mire; *moha* — [of] delusion; *tadā* — then; *gantāsi* — you will attain to; *nirvedam* — indifference; *śrutasya* — regarding [the temporal pleasures expounded in the Vedas] which have been heard; *ca* — and; *śrotavyasya* — regarding that which is yet to be heard.

When your intellect crosses over the mire of delusion, you will become indifferent to [the temporal pleasures expounded in the Vedas] that you have previously heard of and those that you have yet to hear about. (2.52)

*śruti-vipratipannā te yadā sthāsyati niścalā
samādhāv acalā buddhis tadā yogam avāpsyasi*

yadā — when; *te* — your; *buddhiḥ* — intellect; *vipratipannā* — which has been confused; *śruti* — by scriptural and worldly opinions; *niścalā* — [becoming] unoscillating; *acalā sthāsyati* — will remain immovably fixed; *samādhau* — in *samādhi*,⁵ or transcognitive awareness [of Parameśvara]; *tadā* — then; *avāpsyasi* — you will attain; *yogam* — the state of *yoga*.

When your intellect, which has been confused by conflicting scriptural and worldly opinions, becomes unoscillating and thus immovably fixed in transcognitive awareness [of Parameśvara], then you will attain the state of *yoga*. (2.53)

arjuna uvāca

*sthita-prajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhi-sthasya keśava
sthita-dhīḥ kim prabhāṣeta kim āsīta vrajeta kim*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna inquired; *keśava* — O Kṛṣṇa; *kā* — what; *bhāṣā* — [is] the description [i.e., the symptoms]; *sthita-prajñasya* — of one whose wisdom faculty is firmly fixed; *samādhi-sthasya* — [and] who is established in *samādhi*, or transcognitive awareness; *kim* — how; *sthita-dhīḥ* — [does] the person whose intelligence is stable; *prabhāṣeta* — speak; *kim* — how; *āsīta* — does he sit; *kim* — [and] how; *vrajeta* — does he walk.

Arjuna inquired: O Keśava, what are the symptoms of a [God-realized] person, whose wisdom faculty is firmly fixed and who is established in transcognitive awareness? How does the person of stable intelligence speak, how does he sit, and how does he walk? (2.54)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha mano-gatān
ātmany evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajñas tadocyate*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *pārtha* — O son of Prthā; *yadā* — when; *prajahāti* — one casts away completely; *sarvān* — all; *kāmān* — cravings; *manogātān* — of the mind; *tuṣṭaḥ* — [and] is satisfied; *ātmani eva* — in the self alone; *ātmanā* — by virtue of the self [which is of the nature of intrinsic bliss]; *tadā* — then; *ucyate* — he is said; *sthita-prajñas* — to be of steady wisdom.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Pārtha, when a person completely casts away all the cravings of the mind and is satisfied in the self

alone by virtue of the self's intrinsic joy, then he is said to be of steady wisdom. (2.55)

*duḥkheṣv anudvigna-manāḥ sukheṣu vigata-sprhaḥ
vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ sthita-dhīr munir ucyate*

anudvigna-manāḥ — one whose mind is undisturbed; *duḥkheṣu* — in the midst of sorrows; *vigata-sprhaḥ* — who does not hanker; *sukheṣu* — after happiness; *vīta* — [and who] is free; *rāga* — [from] material attachment; *bhaya* — fear; *krodhaḥ* — [and] anger; *ucyate* — is called; *munir* — a sage; *sthita-dhīr* — whose wisdom is stable.

One whose mind remains undisturbed in the midst of sorrows, who does not hanker after happiness, and who is free of material attachment, fear, and anger, is called a sage of stable wisdom. (2.56)

*yaḥ sarvatrānabhisnehas tat tat prāpya śubhāśubham
nābhinandati na dveṣṭi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

yaḥ — one who; *anabhisnehaḥ* — remains unattached; *sarvatra* — in everything; *na abhinandati* — who neither rejoices; *na dveṣṭi* — nor detests; *prāpya* — on attaining; *tat* — those [corresponding conditions]; *śubha* — [of] good fortune; *āśubham* — [and] misfortune; *prajñā* — the wisdom; *tasya* — of such a person; *pratiṣṭhitā* — is stable.

One who remains without attachment in the midst of all things, who neither rejoices at the attainment of good fortune nor detests the befalling of misfortune—such a person is of stable wisdom. (2.57)

*yadā samharate cāyam kūrmo 'ṅgānīva sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

yadā ca—and when; *ayam*—he [the sage]; *sarvaśaḥ*—completely; *samharate*—withdraws; *indriyāṇi*—[his] senses; *indriya-arthebhyaḥ*—from the sense objects; *aṅgāni iva*—like the [withdrawn] limbs; *kūrmaḥ*—of a tortoise; *tasya*—his; *prajñā*—wisdom; *pratiṣṭhitā*—becomes stable.

When the sage completely withdraws all his senses from the sense objects, as a tortoise draws its limbs within its shell, his wisdom becomes stable. (2.58)

*viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ
rasa-varjam raso 'py asya param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*

viṣayāḥ—the sense objects; *vinivartante*—may be given up; *dehinaḥ*—by an embodied being; *nirāhārasya*—who is undergoing abstinence; *rasa-varjam*—with the exception of the attachment [for them]; [however]; *dṛṣṭvā*—upon seeing or realizing; *param*—the Supreme [i.e., Bhagavān]; *rasaḥ api*—even this attachment; *asya*—of his; *nivartate*—disappears.

Although the sense objects may be given up by an embodied being who is practicing abstinence, the attachment for them persists. When, however, there is immediate realization of the Supreme [i.e., Bhagavān] even this attachment of his disappears. (2.59)

*yatato hy api kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ
indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabham manaḥ*

kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; *hi*—certainly; *pramāthīni*—the turbulent; *indriyāṇi*—senses; *prasabham*—forcibly; *haranti*—

snatch away; *manaḥ* — the mind; *vipaścitaḥ puruṣasya api* — even of a wise person; *yataṭaḥ* — who is striving [for liberation].

O son of Kuntī, certainly the turbulent senses forcibly snatch away the mind even of a wise person who is striving for liberation. (2.60)

*tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsīta mat-paraḥ
vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

yuktaḥ — the *yogī* who is united with Me [in devotion]; *mat-paraḥ* — [and] who is intent exclusively upon Me; *āsīta* — should sit; *saṁyamya* — having regulated; *sarvāṇi* — all; *tāni* — those [senses]; *hi* — certainly; *prajñā* — the wisdom; *tasya* — of one; *yasya* — whose; *indriyāṇi* — senses; *vaśe* — are under control; *pratiṣṭhitā* — is steady.

The *yogī* who is united with Me [in devotion] and who is intent exclusively upon Me should sit, having regulated all his senses. One whose senses are under control is certainly of steady wisdom. (2.61)

*dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate*

dhyāyataḥ — by dwelling on; *viṣayān* — sense objects; *puṁsaḥ* — a person's; *saṅgaḥ* — attachment; *teṣu* — for them; *upajāyate* — develops; *saṅgāt* — from attachment; *kāmaḥ* — desire; *sañjāyate* — arises; *kāmāt* — [and] from desire; *krodhaḥ* — anger; *abhijāyate* — arises.

By dwelling on sense objects, a person develops attachment for them. From attachment, desire ensues, and from [unfulfilled] desire anger arises. (2.62)

*krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ
smṛti-bhramśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati*

krodhāt—from anger; *sammohaḥ*—delusion; *bhavati*—takes place; *sammohāt*—[and] from delusion; *vibhramaḥ*—[there is] distortion; *smṛti*—of memory; *smṛti-bhramśāt*—from distortion of memory; *buddhi-nāśaḥ*—[there is] loss of discernment; *buddhi-nāśāt*—[and] from loss of discernment; *praṇaśyati*—one perishes.

From anger comes delusion, and from delusion memory is distorted. From distortion of memory discernment is lost, and when discernment is lost, one perishes. (2.63)

*rāga-dveṣa-vimuktais tu viṣayān indriyaiś caran
ātma-vaśyair vidheyātmā prasādam adhigacchati*

tu—but; *vidheya-ātmā*—a self-controlled person; *caran*—even while experiencing; *viṣayān*—the sense objects; *indriyaiḥ*—through the senses; *ātma-vaśyaiḥ*—[which are] under the regulation of the self; *vimuktaiḥ*—[and] devoid of; *rāga*—attraction; *dveṣa*—[and] aversion; *adhigacchati*—attains; *prasādam*—tranquility [of mind].

But a self-controlled person, even while experiencing the sense objects through the senses, which are under the regulation of the self and hence devoid of attraction and aversion for their objects, attains tranquility of mind. (2.64)

*prasāde sarva-duḥkhānām hānir asyopajāyate
prasanna-cetaso hy āśu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate*

prasāde—on the attainment of tranquility [of mind]; *hāniḥ*—the destruction; *sarva duḥkhānām*—of all sorrows; *asya*—of

his; *upajāyate*—takes place; *hi*—certainly; *buddhiḥ*—the intellect; *prasanna-cetasaḥ*—of a person whose mind is serene; *pari avatiṣṭhate*—becomes firmly established; *āśu*—quickly.

After a person attains tranquility of mind, all of his sorrows are destroyed. Certainly, the intellect of a person whose mind is serene becomes firmly established [in God] without delay. (2.65)

*nāsti buddhir ayuktasya na cāyuktasya bhāvanā
na cābhāvayataḥ śāntir aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham*

ayuktasya—for one who has no control over the mind and senses; *na asti*—there cannot be; *buddhiḥ*—discernment; *ca*—and; *ayuktasya*—for one who has no control over the mind and senses; *na [asti]*—there cannot be; *bhāvanā*—God-consciousness; [moreover]; *abhāvayataḥ*—for one who is not God-conscious; *na [asti]*—there cannot be; *śāntiḥ*—peace; *ca*—and; *kutaḥ*—how; *sukham*—[can there be] happiness; *aśāntasya*—for one who is not peaceful.

A person whose mind and senses are uncontrolled cannot develop proper discernment nor can he be God-conscious.⁶ Moreover, one who is not God-conscious cannot attain peace, and without peace of mind, how can a person attain true happiness? (2.66)

*indriyāṇāṃ hi caratām yaṃ mano 'nuvidhīyate
tat asya harati prajñāṃ vāyur nāvam ivāmbhasi*

hi—indeed; *manaḥ*—the mind; *yat*—which; *anuvidhīyate*—follows; *caratām*—the wandering; *indriyāṇāṃ*—of the senses; *tat*—that [mind]; *harati*—carries away; *prajñāṃ*—the

discernment; *asya* — of such a person; *iva* — just as; *vāyuḥ* — the wind; *nāvam* — [carries away] a boat; *ambhasi* — on the water.

Indeed, the mind that follows in the wake of the wandering senses carries away the discernment of such a person, just as the wind carries from its course a boat on the water. (2.67)

*tasmād yasya mahā-bāho nigrhītāni sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

tasmāt — therefore; *mahā-bāho* — O mighty-armed one; *prajñā* — the intellect; *tasya* — of one; *yasya* — whose; *indriyāṇi* — senses; *nigrhītāni* — are restrained; *sarvaśaḥ* — completely; *indriya-arthebhyaḥ* — from their sense objects; *pratiṣṭhitā* — is steady.

Therefore, O mighty-armed Arjuna, the intellect of a person whose senses are completely restrained from their objects is steady. (2.68)

*yā niśā sarva-bhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ*

saṁyamī — the integrated self; *jāgarti* — remains wakeful; *tasyām* — to that [awareness of the Self]; *yā* — which is; *niśā* — night; *sarva-bhūtānām* — for all living beings; [similarly]; *bhūtāni* — all beings; *jāgrati* — remain awake; *yasyām* — to that [phenomenal awareness]; *sā* — which is; *niśā* — night; *paśyataḥ* — for the realized; *muneḥ* — sage.

The integrated self remains awake to that [awareness of the Self] which is night⁷ for all conditioned beings. [Similarly,] all conditioned beings remain awake to that [phenomenal awareness] which is night for the realized sage. (2.69)

*āpūryamāṇam acala-pratiṣṭham
samudram āpaḥ praviśanti yadvat
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve
sa śāntim āpnoti na kāma-kāmī*

yadvat—just as; *āpaḥ*—the waters [i.e., the rivers]; *praviśanti*—enter; *samudram*—the ocean; *āpūryamāṇam*—[which although] completely full; *acala-pratiṣṭham*—[remains] immovably fixed [within its boundaries]; *tadvat*—similarly; *saḥ*—he [the sage]; *yaṁ*—unto whom; *sarve*—all; *kāmāḥ*—enjoyments; *praviśanti*—merge [without causing any mental modification]; *āpnoti*—attains; *śāntim*—peace; *na*—[but] not; *kāma-kāmī*—one who hankers after such enjoyments.

Just as various rivers flow into the ocean, which, although completely full, remains immovably fixed within its boundaries, so the sage in whom all enjoyments merge [without causing any mental modification] attains peace, but not a person who hankers after such enjoyments. (2.70)

*vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān pumāṁś carati niḥsprhaḥ
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati*

pumān—the person; *yaḥ*—who; *vihāya*—having abandoned; *sarvān*—all; *kāmān*—material desires; *carati*—lives; *niḥsprhaḥ*—devoid of hankering; *nirmamaḥ*—free from the notion of “mine;” *nirahaṅkāraḥ*—[and] free from the notion of “I;” *saḥ*—he; *adhigacchati*—attains; *śāntim*—perfect peace.

The person who, having abandoned all desires, lives devoid of hankering and free from the notions of “I” and “mine,” attains perfect peace. (2.71)

*eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha nainām prāpya vimuhyati
sthitvāsyām anta-kāle 'pi brahma-nirvāṇam ṛcchati*

pārtha—O son of Pṛthā; *eṣā*—this; *brāhmī sthitiḥ*—[is] the God-realized state; *prāpya*—having reached; *enām*—this; *na vimuhyati*—one is not deluded; *sthitvā*—being established; *asyām*—in it; *anta-kāle api*—even at the time of death; *ṛcchati*—one attains; *brahma-nirvāṇam*—liberation in Brahman.

O Pārtha, this is the God-realized state. Having reached it, one is never deluded. Being established in this state, even at the time of death, one attains liberation in Brahman [i.e., the state of unconditional being in association with Parabrahman].⁸ (2.72)



1. Ordinarily, we gather valid knowledge about ourselves and the world around us either through the medium of the senses (i.e., perception) or through the mind (i.e., inference and rationality). The word *samādhi*, however, which is a technical term in the classical Yoga system of Patañjali, refers to a mode of knowing, cognition, or awareness that transcends the conventional range of valid knowledge acquisition available through perception and inference. *Samādhi* is not mere “trance,” which implies the suspension of the ordinary functions of waking-state consciousness. The term “transcognitive awareness” as a translation of *samādhi* is meant in the precise sense of a mode of awareness that transcends ordinary cognition. The word “cognition” here is used in a generic sense to refer to all conventional means of knowing (*pramāṇa*), of which perception and inference are primary. So, the term “transcognitive awareness” informs us that *samādhi* is not an unconscious state, but a supra-conscious state that actualizes the possibility of immediate intuition of the Supreme Reality (Parameśvara).

2. This signifies that a person can choose to act or to abstain from action, but there is no such choice in regard to the results of one’s actions.

3. Bondage to results occurs by considering oneself the cause of such fruits and by harboring desire for them.

4. To maintain a balanced state of mind while performing one’s duty is called *yoga*. This is expertise on the path of selfless action (*niṣkāma-karma*).

5. The state of the mind when it is unwaveringly fixed on one object in complete absorption.

[6.](#) The term *bhāvanā* means awareness or concentration of the mind. Here it is taken to mean God-consciousness.

[7.](#) Night here implies a lack of interest in, or an absence of awareness of, that which absorbs the interest of others. Remaining awake signifies awareness of that which others are asleep to. Kṛṣṇa is pointing out that the interests of the spiritually awakened and the spiritually asleep are opposite, like day and night.

[8.](#) The term *parabrahman* literally means the “Supreme Brahman” or the “Supreme Absolute.” In theistic Vedānta, it is used primarily to refer to the qualified Absolute (Bhagavān) in contradistinction to the unqualified Absolute (Brahman). The terms *brahman*, *parabrahman*, *paramātmā*, and *bhagavān* all refer to one and the same Reality. These terms are, therefore, interchangeable when used in a generic sense to refer to that Reality, as is the case in this verse with the word *brahman*. In its technical sense, however, *brahman* is used specifically to refer to the unqualified Absolute, as in Advaita-vedānta. If interpreted in this way, *brahma-nirvāṇa*, stated in this verse, could be taken to mean *brahma-laya*, or dissolution of the self in Brahman, as Śrīdhara Svāmī has done. But such an interpretation is a specification of what is otherwise a generic reference. Moreover, it is inconsistent with the overall theme of the *Gītā*, which is clearly theistic in nature. Hence, Brahman here is to be understood as Parabrahman, the personal Absolute, Bhagavān, and *brahma-nirvāṇa* as the liberated state in association with Him.

CHAPTER 3

THE PATH OF ACTION

KARMA-YOGA

This chapter contains forty-three verses, three spoken by Arjuna and forty by Kṛṣṇa. Just as a student who is full of prejudices and preconceptions has difficulty understanding new ideas and information presented by a teacher, Arjuna, who had already made up his mind not to fight, could not thoroughly grasp Śrī Kṛṣṇa's teachings. Kṛṣṇa's words appeared ambiguous and confusing to him. So this chapter begins with Arjuna asking Śrī Kṛṣṇa a question to clear his doubt.

Kṛṣṇa had briefly explained *sāṅkhya-yoga* (the discipline of analytic knowledge) and *karma-yoga* (the path of sacred action). Arjuna now asks Kṛṣṇa, "If You consider resolute intelligence (free from the *guṇas*) superior to work, then why do You engage me in this terrible war?" Arjuna asks what would be better for him, cultivating transcendental knowledge or adhering to the path of action (1–2)?

In response, Bhagavān begins explaining the difference between *jñāna-yoga* and *karma-yoga*. He emphasizes the performance of action as a way to attain equanimity (4–29). Further, He states that no one can remain without action even for a moment. One's nature impels one to act. A hypocrite makes a show of renunciation while harboring internal desires for enjoyment. Thus, one should perform one's duty. Action is superior to inaction (5–8). In Vedic society, great importance was given to performance of *yajña*, or offering oblations into the fire, along with the chanting of *mantras* to propitiate

specific deities. Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains the importance of *yajña* and equates it with *karma*, or duty. One who is satisfied in the self has no duties to perform (9–19).

Great kings like Janaka attained perfection through *karma-yoga*. Even a perfected *karma-yogī* should continue performing his duties to set an example for others, although he is not obliged to act. In this regard, Śrī Kṛṣṇa posits His own behavior as an example (20–24). Those who are attached to the fruits of their actions should not be encouraged to renounce them. All actions are impelled by the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*, yet a deluded person thinks himself or herself to be the agent. A person situated in knowledge is aware of the play of the *guṇas* and thus does not become implicated in them (25–29). Kṛṣṇa recommends that a person should surrender all actions to Him with discerning vision, free from desire and egoism. Having done so, one should perform actions with a peaceful mind (30). Kṛṣṇa declares the benefits of following His teaching and the loss in failing to do so (31–32). He then concludes, “It is better to perform one’s own duty, even though imperfectly, than to perform another’s duty well” (35).

Arjuna then inquires as to that mysterious force which impels a person to knowingly engage in unrighteous acts (36). Kṛṣṇa replies, “It is material desire (*kāma*), born from the *guṇa* of passion (*rajas*) and which later transforms into anger, that is insatiable and highly inauspicious. Know it to be the enemy on the path of liberation” (37). He states that this enemy, in the form of the desire for enjoyment, occupies one’s senses, mind, and intellect, covers the power of discernment, and bewilders one about the real purpose of life. Therefore, He prescribes controlling the senses, the mind, and the body, and slaying the enemy of desire through resolute intellect (40–43).

arjuna uvāca
jyāyasī cet karmaṇas te matā buddhir janārdana
tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore mām niyojayasi keśava

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna inquired; *janārdana* — O Kṛṣṇa; *cet* — if; *buddhiḥ* — resolute intelligence; *matā* — is considered; *te* — by You; *jyāyasī* — as superior; *karmaṇaḥ* — to fruitive action; *kiṁ* — why; *tat* — therefore; *keśava* — O Kṛṣṇa; *niyojayasi* — do You engage; *mām* — me; *ghore* — in this terrible; *karmaṇi* — act [of battle].

Arjuna inquired: O Janārdana, if You consider resolute intelligence [free from the *guṇas*] superior to fruitive action, why then do You, O Keśava, engage me in this terrible battle? (3.1)

vyāmiśreṇa vākyena buddhiṁ mohayasīva me
tad ekaṁ vada niścitya yena śreyo 'ham āpnuyām

mohayasī — You are bewildering; *iva* — virtually [i.e., effectively or to some extent]; *me* — my; *buddhiṁ* — intelligence; *vyāmiśreṇa iva* — by [Your] apparently conflicting; *vākyena* — words; *niścitya* — please ascertain; *vada* — [and then] inform me; *tat* — [of] that; *ekaṁ* — one [process]; *yena* — by which; *aham* — I; *āpnuyām* — may obtain; *śreyaḥ* — the highest good.

You are virtually bewildering my intelligence with Your apparently conflicting words. Please ascertain and then inform me of that one process by which I may obtain the highest good. (3.2)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
loke 'smin dvi-vidhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha
jñāna-yogena sāṅkhyānām karma-yogena yoginām

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *anagha*—O sinless one; *dvi-vidhā*—two types of; *niṣṭhā*—fixity [i.e., spiritual discipline]; *asmin loke*—[available] in this world; *proktā*—have been enunciated; *purā*—previously; *mayā*—by Me; *jñāna-yogena*—by the path of knowledge; *sāṅkhyānām*—for the *sāṅkhya-yogīs*; *karma-yogena*—[and] by the path of motiveless action; *yoginām*—for the *karma-yogīs*.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O sinless Arjuna, I have previously enunciated two types of spiritual fixity that are available in this world—the *jñānīs*, or the *sāṅkhya-yogīs*,¹ proceed by the path of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*), whereas the *karma-yogīs* progress via the path of action without selfish motives (*karma-yoga*). (3.3)

na karmaṇām anārambhān naiṣkarmyam puruṣo 'śnute
na ca sannyasanād eva siddhim samadhigacchati

anārambhāt—by the non-performance; *karmaṇām*—of prescribed duties; *puruṣaḥ*—a person; *na śnute*—cannot gain; *naiṣkarmyam*—freedom from the bondage of *karma*; *ca*—and; *na samadhigacchati*—[a person of impure heart] cannot attain; *siddhim*—perfection; *sannyasanāt eva*—merely by giving up [prescribed action].

Without performing prescribed duties, one cannot gain freedom from the bondage of *karma* (*naiṣkarmya*), and a person of impure heart cannot attain perfection merely by giving up prescribed action. (3.4)

*na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛti-jair guṇaiḥ*

hi—indeed; *na kaścit*—no one; *jātu tiṣṭhati*—can ever remain; *kṣaṇam api*—even for a moment; *akarma-kṛt*—without performing action; *hi*—because; *sarvaḥ*—everyone; *kāryate*—is impelled to perform; *karma*—action; *avaśaḥ*—helplessly; *guṇaiḥ*—by the *guṇas*; *prakṛti-jaiḥ*—born of material nature.

Indeed, no one can ever remain even for a moment without performing action, because everyone is impelled to act helplessly by the *guṇas* born of *prakṛti* (material nature). (3.5)

*karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya ya āste manasā smaran
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate*

yaḥ—one who; *saṁyamya*—while [outwardly] restraining; *karma-indriyāṇi*—the organs of action [and the cognitive sense faculties as well]; *āste*—dwells; *manasā*—mentally or internally; *smaran*—in recollection; *indriya-arthān*—of the sense objects; *saḥ*—he [is]; *vimūḍha-ātmā*—of deluded intellect; *ucyate*—[and] is called; *mithyā-ācāraḥ*—a hypocrite.

A person who outwardly restrains the organs of action [and the cognitive sense faculties as well]² but who dwells internally upon the recollection of sense objects, is of deluded intellect and is called a hypocrite. (3.6)

*yas tv indriyāṇi manasā niyamyārabhate 'rjuna
karmendriyaiḥ karma-yogam asaktaḥ sa viśiṣyate*

tu—but; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *yaḥ*—one who; *niyamya*—controlling; *indriyāṇi*—the senses; *manasā*—by the mind;

asaktaḥ — who is unattached to the fruits of action; *ārabhate* — [and] who undertakes; *karma-yogam* — the performance of prescribed duties; *karma-indriyaiḥ* — by the organs of action [and also by the cognitive senses]; *saḥ* — he; *viśiṣyate* — is far superior.

But, O Arjuna, one who controls the senses by the mind, who remains unattached to the fruits of action, and who undertakes his prescribed duties through means of the organs of action [and the cognitive senses] — such a person is far superior. (3.7)

*niyatam kuru karma tvam karma jyāyo hy akarmaṇaḥ
śarīra-yātrāpi ca te na prasiddhyed akarmaṇaḥ*

[therefore]; *tvam* — you; *kuru* — perform; *niyatam* — [your] obligatory; *karma* — action; *hi* — because; *karma* — action; *jyāyaḥ* — is superior; *akarmaṇaḥ* — to inaction; *ca* — moreover; *akarmaṇaḥ* — without acting; *api* — even; *te* — your; *yātrā* — sustenance; *śarīra* — [of] the body; *na prasiddhyet* — cannot be accomplished.

Therefore, perform your obligatory actions, for action is superior to inaction. Moreover, without action, even your bodily sustenance cannot be accomplished. (3.8)

*yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ
tad-artham karma kaunteya mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara*

anyatra — [all endeavors] other; *karmaṇaḥ* — than action; *yajña-arthāt* — performed for the sake of Viṣṇu; *karma-bandhanaḥ* — [are] the source of bondage to consequential action; *ayam lokaḥ* — in this world; [therefore]; *kaunteya* — O son of Kuntī; *samācara* — perform efficiently; *karma* — your duty; *tad artham*

—for the sake of Him [Viṣṇu]; *mukta-saṅgaḥ*—being freed from attachment to the fruits [of action].

All endeavors other than those that are performed as an offering to Viṣṇu are the source of bondage in this world. Therefore, O Kaunteya (Arjuna), perform your duty efficiently for the sake of Viṣṇu alone, remaining unattached to the fruits [of action]. (3.9)

*saha-yajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ
anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo 'stv iṣṭa-kāmadhuk*

purā—in the beginning of creation; *prajā-patiḥ*—Brahmā; *sṛṣṭvā*—having brought forth; *prajāḥ*—humankind; *saha*—along with; *yajñāḥ*—the performance of *yajña*; *uvāca*—said; *prasaviṣyadhvam*—you shall prosper; *anena*—by this [*yajña*]; *eṣaḥ astu*—may it become; *vaḥ*—for you; *kāmadhuk*—that which yields all objects of longing; *iṣṭa*—desired [by you].

In the beginning of creation, after Brahmā brought forth humankind along with the performance of *yajña*,³ he said, “You shall prosper by this *yajña*. May it become that which fulfills all objects of longing desired by you.” (3.10)

*devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ
parasparam bhāvayantaḥ śreyāḥ param avāpsyatha*

bhāvayatā—nourish; *devān*—the gods [*devas*]; *anena*—by this [*yajña*]; [and by so doing]; *te*—those; *devāḥ*—gods; *bhāvayantu*—may they be gracious; *vaḥ*—unto you; *bhāvayantaḥ*—by being benevolent to one another; *parasparam*—mutually; *avāpsyatha*—you will attain; *param*—the supreme; *śreyāḥ*—welfare.

[Brahmā continues:] “Nourish the *devas* through this *yajña*, and [by so doing] may the *devas* be gracious to you. Thus, through mutual benevolence, you shall attain the highest welfare.” (3.11)

*iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ
tair dattān apradāyaibhyo yo bhuñkte stena eva saḥ*

yajña-bhāvitāḥ — being pleased by the performance of *yajñas*; *devāḥ* — the gods; *dāsyante* — will bestow; *vaḥ* — unto you; *iṣṭān* — [your] desired; *bhogān* — objects; *hi* — therefore; *yaḥ* — one who; *bhuñkte* — enjoys; *dattān* — the gifts bestowed; *taiḥ* — by them [the gods]; *apradāya* — without offering; *ebhyaḥ* — to them [the gods]; *saḥ* — he; *stenaḥ eva* — [is] certainly a thief.

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa continued:] Pleased by the *yajñas*, the *devas* will bestow upon you your desired objects. Therefore, one who enjoys the gifts bestowed by the *devas* without making an offering to them in return is verily a thief. (3.12)

*yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ
bhuñjate te tv agham pāpā ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt*

santaḥ — the virtuous; *āśinaḥ* — who partake; *yajña-śiṣṭa* — [of] the remnants of *yajña*; *mucyante* — are absolved; *sarva* — [of] all; *kilbiṣaiḥ* — reactions to their misdeeds; *tu* — but; *te* — those; *pāpāḥ* — wrongdoers; *ye* — who; *pacanti* — cook food; *ātma-kāraṇāt* — for their own gratification; *bhuñjate* — partake; *agham* — [only of] demerit [i.e., detrimental *karma*].

The virtuous who partake of the remnants of *yajña* are absolved of all reactions to their misdeeds. But those wrongdoers who cook food for their own gratification alone partake only of demerit [i.e., detrimental *karma*]. (3.13)

*annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaḥ anna-sambhavaḥ
yajñād bhavati parjanyo yajñaḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

bhūtāni—all beings; *bhavanti*—subsist; *annāt*—from food; *sambhavaḥ*—production; *anna*—[of] food; *parjanyaḥ*—[is] from rain; *parjanyaḥ*—rain; *bhavati*—comes about; *yajñāt*—from *yajña*; *yajñaḥ*—[and] sacrificial action; *samudbhavaḥ*—ensues; *karma*—[from] prescribed duty.

All beings subsist on food, and food is produced from rain. Rain is caused by *yajña*, and *yajña* ensues from prescribed duty. (3.14)

*karma brahmodbhavaṁ viddhi brahmākṣara-samudbhavam
tasmāt sarva-gataṁ brahma nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*

viddhi—know [that]; *karma*—prescribed duty; *udbhavam*—originates; *brahma*—[from] the Vedas; [and]; *brahma*—the Vedas; *samudbhavam*—manifest; *akṣara*—[from] the indestructible [i.e., Parabrahman, the nondual Personal Absolute]; *tasmāt*—therefore; *sarva-gataṁ*—all-pervading; *brahma*—Brahman; *pratiṣṭhitam*—is present; *nityaṁ*—eternally; *yajñe*—in *yajña* (sacrificial action).

Know that prescribed duty originates from the Vedas, and the Vedas manifest from the indestructible [Parabrahman]. Therefore, all-pervading Brahman [i.e., Parabrahman] is ever present in *yajña*. (3.15)

*evaṁ pravartitaṁ cakram nānuvartayatīha yaḥ
aghāyur indriyārāmo moghaṁ pārtha sa jīvati*

pārtha—O son of Prthā (Arjuna); *yaḥ*—one who; *iha*—in this life; *na anuvartayati*—does not observe; *cakram*—the creative

cycle; *pravartitam* — set into motion [by the Vedas]; *evam* — in this manner; *saḥ* — he; *agha-āyuh* — whose life is sinful; *indriya-ārāmaḥ* — [and] who delights only in the senses; *jīvati* — lives; *mogham* — in vain.

O Arjuna, one who in this life does not observe this creative cycle set into motion in the manner depicted leads a sinful life, delighting only in the senses. Such a person lives in vain. (3.16)

*yas tv ātma-ratir eva syād ātma-tr̥ptaś ca mānavaḥ
ātmany eva ca santuṣṭas tasya kāryam na vidyate*

tu — but; *mānavaḥ* — the person; *yaḥ* — who; *ātma-ratiḥ* — delights in the self; *eva* — only; *ca* — and; *syāt* — who is; *ātma-tr̥ptaḥ* — self-satisfied; *ca* — and; *santuṣṭaḥ* — content; *ātmani* — in the self; *eva* — alone; *tasya* — for him; *kāryam* — duty; *na vidyate* — does not exist.

But the person who delights only in the self, who is self-satisfied and content in the self alone, has no duties to perform. (3.17)

*naiva tasya kṛtenārtho
nākṛteneha kaścana
na cāsyā sarva-bhūteṣu
kaścīd artha-vyapāśrayaḥ*

iha — in this world; *tasya* — he [the self-realized person] has; *na* — no; *arthaḥ eva* — purpose whatsoever [to achieve]; *kṛtena* — by the performance of prescribed duty; *na ca* — nor; *kaścana* — anything whatsoever [to lose]; *akṛtena* — by the non-performance of duty; *na* — nor; *asya* — does he have;

vyapāśrayaḥ — dependence; *sarva-bhūteṣu* — on any living being; *kaścit* — [for] any; *artha* — purpose.

In this world, such a self-realized person has nothing at all to gain by the performance of prescribed duty nor anything to lose by the non-performance of duty, nor does he depend on anyone for fulfilling any purpose. (3.18)

*tasmād asaktaḥ satatam kāryam karma samācara
asakto hy ācaran karma param āpnoti puruṣaḥ*

tasmāt — therefore; *satatam* — always; *samācara* — perform efficiently; *karma* — action; *kāryam* — [that is meant] to be done [i.e., that is prescribed for you]; *asaktaḥ* — without attachment [to the results]; *ācaran* — by carrying out; *karma* — one's prescribed duty; *asaktaḥ* — without attachment; *puruṣaḥ* — a person; *hi* — certainly; *āpnoti* — attains; *param* — the supreme [goal].

Therefore, always perform your prescribed duty efficiently without attachment for the results. By carrying out one's prescribed duty without attachment, a person certainly attains the supreme goal. (3.19)

*karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhim āsthitā janakādayaḥ
loka-saṅgraham evāpi sampaśyan kartum arhasi*

hi — indeed; *karmaṇā eva* — by motiveless action alone; *janaka-ādayaḥ* — Janaka and others; *āsthitāḥ* — became situated; *saṁsiddhim* — [in] perfection; *sampaśyan* — considering; *api* — also; *loka-saṅgraham* — the right ideal for the instruction of people in general; *arhasi eva* — you are certainly meant [i.e., you should]; *kartum* — to act [i.e., to perform your duty].

Indeed, by motiveless action alone, Janaka⁴ and others realized perfection. Considering too the right ideal to be set for the instruction of people in general, you should certainly perform your duty. (3.20)

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate*

yat yat—whatever [action]; *śreṣṭhaḥ*—a great person; *ācarati*—performs; *tat tat eva*—that and that alone; *itaraḥ*—common; *janaḥ*—people [emulate]; *yat*—whatever; *pramāṇam*—standard; *saḥ*—he; *kurute*—sets; *lokaḥ*—common people; *anuvartate*—follow; *tat*—that.

Whatever action a great person performs, the general populace emulates. Whatever standard such an eminent person sets, common people follow. (3.21)

*na me pārthāsti kartavyam triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana
nānavāptam avāptavyam varta eva ca karmaṇi*

pārtha—O son of Prṥthā; *me*—for Me; *na asti*—there is not; *kartavyam*—any duty to perform; [since]; *na*—there is not; *kiñcana*—anything whatsoever; *triṣu*—in the three; *lokeṣu*—worlds; *anavāptam*—that is unobtained [by Me]; *avāptavyam*—[or] to be obtained; *eva ca*—and yet; *varte*—I am engaged; *karmaṇi*—in action.

O Arjuna, I have no duty to perform, since there is nothing whatsoever in the three worlds that is not already obtained by Me nor anything to be attained [in the future], yet still I too am engaged in action. (3.22)

*yadi hy aham na varteyam jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*

yadi—if; *aham*—I; *jātu*—ever; *na varteyam*—ceased to engage; *karmaṇi*—in action; *atandritaḥ*—vigilantly; *pārtha*—O son of Prthā; [then]; *hi*—certainly; *manuṣyāḥ*—all human beings; *anuvartante*—would follow; *mama*—My; *vartma*—footsteps; *sarvaśaḥ*—in all respects.

If I ever ceased to be vigilantly engaged in action, O Arjuna, then certainly people in general would follow My footsteps in all respects. (3.23)

*utsīdeyur ime lokā na kuryām karma ced aham
saṅkarasya ca kartā syām upahanyām imāḥ prajāḥ*

cet—if; *aham*—I; *na kuryām*—did not perform; *karma*—action; *ime*—all these; *lokāḥ*—worlds; *utsīdeyuh*—would be ruined; *ca*—and; *syām*—I would be; *kartā*—the agent [i.e., the cause]; *saṅkarasya*—of the disruption of the social classes and their duties; [in this way, I]; *upahanyām*—would destroy; *imāḥ*—these; *prajāḥ*—people.

If I did not perform action, all these worlds would come to ruin, and I would become the cause of the disruption of the social classes and their duties. In this way, I would be responsible for the destruction of these people. (3.24)

*saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṁso yathā kurvanti bhārata
kuryād vidvāṁs tathāśaktaś cikīrṣur loka-saṅgraham*

yathā—as; *avidvāṁsaḥ*—the unaware; *kurvanti*—perform; *karmaṇi*—action; *saktāḥ*—being attached; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata; *tathā*—in the same way; *vidvān*—the

wise; *kuryāt*—should perform [action]; *asaktaḥ*—without attachment; *cikīrṣuḥ*—desiring to do; *loka-saṅgraham*—welfare to the world.

As the unaware engage in action with attachment, O Bhārata, so should the wise perform action without attachment, intending the welfare of the world. (3.25)

*na buddhi-bhedam janayed ajñānām karma-saṅginām
joṣayet sarva-karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran*

vidvān—a wise person; *na janayet*—should not provoke; *buddhi-bhedam*—mental unsettlement; *ajñānām*—for the unaware; *karma-saṅginām*—who are attached to action; *yuktaḥ*—[rather] being situated in evenness of mind; *joṣayet*—he should engage [them in action]; *samācaran*—while meticulously carrying out; *sarva*—all; *karmāṇi*—actions.

A wise person should not unsettle the minds of the unaware who are attached to action [by prompting them toward inaction]. Rather, being situated in evenness of mind, he should engage them in action, while meticulously carrying out all manner of action. (3.26)

*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate*

sarvaśaḥ—all; *karmāṇi*—actions; *kriyamāṇāni*—are performed; *guṇaiḥ*—by the senses composed of the *guṇas*; *prakṛteḥ*—of material nature; *ātmā*—[yet] the person whose mind; *ahaṅkāra-vimūḍha*—is deluded by egoic identification; *manyate*—thinks; *iti*—thus; *kartā aham*—“I am the doer.”

All actions are conducted by the senses that are composed of the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*. Yet, the person whose mind is deluded by egoic identification thinks, “I am the doer.” (3.27)

*tattva-vit tu mahā-bāho guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate*

tu—but; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed one; *tattva-vit*—the knower of the truth; *vibhāgayoḥ*—of the [self’s] distinction; *guṇa-karma*—from the mind and senses and their functions; *na sajjate*—remains unattached; *matvā*—knowing; *iti*—thus; *guṇāḥ*—[that only] the senses and the mind; *vartante*—are engaged; *guṇeṣu*—in their respective sense objects.

But, O mighty-armed, one who knows the truth of the self’s distinction from the mind and senses (*guṇas*) and their functions (*karma*) remains unattached, knowing that only the mind and senses (*guṇas*) are engaged with their respective objects (*guṇeṣu*). (3.28)

*prakṛter guṇa-sammūdhāḥ sajjante guṇa-karmasu
tān akṛtsna-vido mandān kṛtsna-vin na vicālayet*

sammūdhāḥ—those who are deluded; *guṇa*—by the *guṇas*; *prakṛteḥ*—of material nature; *sajjante*—become attached; *guṇa-karmasu*—to the senses and their functions; *kṛtsna-vit*—a person in perfect wisdom; *na vicālayet*—should not disturb; *tān*—those; *akṛtsna-vidāḥ*—who are unaware; *mandān*—[and] who are of unawakened intellect.

Being deluded by the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*, people become attached to the senses and their functions. A person in perfect wisdom should not disturb the minds of those who are unaware and of unawakened intellect. (3.29)

*mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātma-cetasā
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ*

[therefore]; *sannyasya* — dedicating; *sarvāṇi* — all; *karmāṇi* — actions; *mayi* — unto Me; *cetasā* — with your mind; *adhyātma* — [fixed] on the self; *bhūtvā* — being; *nirāśīḥ* — devoid of desire for the fruits; *nirmamaḥ* — free from all notions of proprietorship; *vigata-jvaraḥ* — [and] having abandoned mental anguish; *yudhyasva* — be engaged in battle.

Therefore, dedicating all actions to Me with your mind fixed on the self, being devoid of desire for the fruits, free from all notions of proprietorship, and having abandoned all mental anguish, be engaged in battle. (3.30)

*ye me matam idaṁ nityam anuṭiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ
śraddhāvanto 'nasūyanto mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ*

ye — those; *mānavāḥ* — human beings [who]; *śraddhā-vantaḥ* — being endowed with faith; *anasūyantaḥ* — [and] devoid of envy; *nityam* — constantly; *anuṭiṣṭhanti* — repeatedly abide; *idaṁ* — this; *matam* — teaching; *me* — of Mine; *te* — they; *api* — too; *mucyante* — become free; *karmabhiḥ* — from the bondage of *karma*.

Those human beings who, being endowed with faith and devoid of envy, constantly abide this teaching of Mine, they too are surely freed from *karma*. (3.31)

*ye tv etad abhyasūyanto nānuṭiṣṭhanti me matam
sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhāṁs tān viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ*

tu — but; *ye* — those who; *abhyasūyantaḥ* — are envious; *na anuṭiṣṭhanti* — [and who] do not adhere to regularly; *etat* — this;

matam—teaching; *me*—of Mine; *viddhi*—know; *tān*—them; *vimūḍhān*—as deluded; *sarva-jñāna*—[in the matter of] all knowledge; *naṣṭān*—as having succumbed to ruin; *acetasaḥ*—[and] as bereft of discriminating intellect.

But those who are envious and do not adhere to this teaching of Mine, know them to be deluded in the matter of all knowledge, succumbed to ruin, and bereft of discriminating intellect. (3.32)

*sadṛśaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛter jñānavān api
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati*

jñānavān api—even a wise person; *ceṣṭate*—acts; *sadṛśam*—in accordance with; *svasyāḥ*—his own; *prakṛteḥ*—priorly acquired nature; *bhūtāni*—all living beings; *yānti*—act or follow; *prakṛtim*—[their] acquired disposition; *kim*—what; *nigrahaḥ*—[will] restraint; *kariṣyati*—accomplish.

Even a wise person acts in accordance with his own priorly acquired nature. All living beings follow their acquired disposition. What can external restraint accomplish? (3.33)

*indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau
tayor na vaśam āgacchet tau hy asya paripanthinau*

rāga—attachment; *dveṣau*—[and] aversion; *indriyasya*—pertaining to the sense faculties; *vyavasthitau*—are rooted; *indriyasya arthe*—in their corresponding sensory objects; *na āgacchet*—one should not come; *vaśam*—under the sway; *tayoḥ*—of them [attachment and aversion]; *hi*—since; *tau*—they; *paripanthinau*—are impediments; *asya*—to him [i.e., to the spiritual aspirant].

Attachment and aversion pertaining to the sense faculties are rooted in their corresponding sensory objects. One should not come under the sway of such attachment and aversion, for they are impediments to the spiritual aspirant. (3.34)

*śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt
sva-dharme nidhanam śreyaḥ para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ*

sva-dharmaḥ — the performance of one’s “own duty;” *viguṇaḥ* — [even if] deficient; *śreyān* — [is] superior; *para-dharmāt* — to taking up another’s duty; *su-anuṣṭhitāt* — [even if] performed well; *nidhanam* — [even] death; *sva-dharme* — [while discharging] one’s own duty; *śreyaḥ* — [is] superior; *para-dharmaḥ* — [since] the execution of another’s duty; *bhaya-āvahaḥ* — is perilous.

The performance of one’s “own duty,” even if somehow deficient, is superior to taking up another’s duty, even if performed well. Even death occurring in the discharge of one’s own duty is superior to the execution of another’s duty, since the latter path is perilous. (3.35)

*arjuna uvāca
atha kena prayukto 'yaṁ pāpam carati pūruṣaḥ
anicchann api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna inquired; *atha* — then; *prayuktaḥ* — being impelled; *kena* — by what; *vārṣṇeya* — O descendant of Vṛṣṇi; *ayaṁ* — this; *pūruṣaḥ* — person; *carati* — commits; *pāpam* — sin; *anicchan api* — even unwillingly; *iva* — as if; *niyojitaḥ* — driven; *balāt* — by force.

Arjuna inquired: What impels a person, O Kṛṣṇa, to commit sin even unwillingly, as if driven by force? (3.36)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ

mahāśano mahā-pāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān replied; *eṣaḥ*—[it is] this; *kāmaḥ*—material desire; *samudbhavaḥ*—born of; *rajaḥ-guṇa*—the *guṇa* of passion; *krodhaḥ eṣaḥ*—[and which later transforms into] this anger; *mahā-aśanaḥ*—[that is] insatiable; *mahā-pāpmā*—[and] highly inauspicious; *viddhi*—know; *enam*—this; *vairiṇam*—as the enemy; *iha*—here [on the path of liberation].

Śrī Bhagavān replied: It is material desire (*kāma*), born from the *guṇa* of passion (*rajas*) and which later transforms into anger, that is insatiable and highly inauspicious. Know it to be the enemy on the path of liberation. (3.37)

dhūmenāvriyate vahnir yathādarśo malena ca

yatholbenāvṛto garbhas tathā tenedam āvṛtam

yathā—just as; *vahniḥ*—fire; *āvriyate*—is covered; *dhūmena*—by smoke; *adarśaḥ*—a mirror; *malena*—by dirt; *ca*—and; *yathā*—just as; *garbhaḥ*—the embryo; *āvṛtaḥ*—is covered; *ulbena*—by the womb; *tathā*—in the same way; *idam*—this [the self]; *āvṛtam*—is covered; *tena*—by that [desire].

Just as fire is covered by smoke, a mirror by dirt, and the embryo by the womb, so is the self covered by desire (*kāma*). (3.38)

āvṛtaṁ jñānam etena jñānino nitya-vairiṇā

kāma-rūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇānalena ca

kaunteya — O son of Kuntī; *jñānam* — discernment; *āvr̥tam* — is covered; *etena* — by this; *nitya-vairiṇā* — eternal enemy; *jñāninaḥ* — of the wise; *kāma-rūpeṇa* — in the form of desire; *duṣpūreṇa ca* — which is also insatiable; *analena* — [like] fire.

O Arjuna, discernment is covered by this eternal enemy of the wise in the form of desire, which is insatiable like fire. (3.39)

*indriyāṇi mano buddhir asyādhiṣṭhānam ucyate
etair vimohayaty eṣa jñānam āvr̥tya dehinam*

indriyāṇi — the senses; *manaḥ* — the mind; *buddhiḥ* — [and] the intellect; *ucyate* — are said to be; *adhiṣṭhānam* — the abode or residence; *asya* — of this [desire]; *āvr̥tya* — covering; *jñānam* — discernment; *etaiḥ* — by these faculties [the senses, mind, and intellect and their respective functions]; *eṣaḥ* — this [desire]; *vimohayati* — deludes; *dehinam* — the embodied self.

The senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be the abode of desire (*kāma*). Covering discernment through these faculties, desire deludes the embodied self. (3.40)

*tasmāt tvam indriyāṇy ādau niyamya bharatarṣabha
pāpmānam prajahi hy enam jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam*

tasmāt — therefore; *bharata-rṣabha* — O chief amongst the descendants of Bharata; *tvam* — you; *niyamya* — by regulating; *ādau* — first; *indriyāṇi* — the senses; *prajahi* — cast off; *hi* — indeed; *enam* — this [*kāma*]; *pāpmānam* — embodiment of sin; *nāśanam* — [which is] the destroyer; *jñāna* — [of] discernment; *vijñāna* — [and] immediate realization [of truth].

Therefore, O best of the Bharatas, by first regulating the senses, cast off this embodiment of sin [desire], which destroys discernment and immediate realization [of truth]. (3.41)

*indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ param manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ*

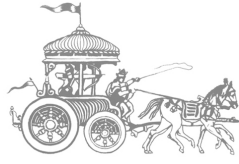
indriyāṇi — the senses; *āhuḥ* — are said; *parāṇi* — to be superior [to the sense objects]; *param* — superior; *indriyebhyaḥ* — to the senses; *manaḥ* — [is] the mind; *parā* — superior; *manasas tu* — even to the mind; *buddhiḥ* — [is] the intellect; *tu* — but; *yaḥ* — the one who; *parataḥ* — is superior; *buddheḥ* — to the intellect; *saḥ* — [is] he [the self].

The senses are said to be superior [to the objects of perception, such as the gross body], superior to the senses is the mind, superior even to the mind is the intellect, but, that which is superior to the intellect is he [the self]. (3.42)

*evam buddheḥ param buddhvā saṁstabhyātmānam ātmanā
jahi śatrum mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam*

mahā-bāho — O mighty-armed one; *buddhvā* — knowing [the self]; *evam* — thus; *param* — as superior; *buddheḥ* — to the intellect; *saṁstabhya* — [and] stabilizing; *ātmānam* — the mind [*manas*]; *ātmanā* — by resolute intellect [*niścayātmikā-buddhi*]; *jahi* — destroy; *durāsadam* — [this] formidable; *śatrum* — enemy; *kāma-rūpaṁ* — in the form of desire.

O mighty-armed Arjuna, knowing the self as thus superior to the intellect and stabilizing the mind [*manas*] by resolute intellect [*niścayātmikā-buddhi*], destroy this formidable enemy in the form of desire. (3.43)



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1. Here, Kṛṣṇa is using the term *sāṅkhya-yogīs* for *jñāna-yogīs*.
 2. The word *karmendriyāṇi* literally means “organs of action,” but here the term also includes the organs of knowledge. Hypocrisy cannot be complete unless the organs of knowledge are included in what is merely superficially restrained.
 3. *Yajña* is usually understood to be a Vedic ritual to please the *devas*. In such a ceremony, oblations are offered into the fire and *mantras* are recited. The word *yajña* is also a name of Lord Viṣṇu, the supreme beneficiary of the activities of *yajña*. The Vedas enjoin: *yajño vai viṣṇuḥ*, “*Yajña* is indeed Viṣṇu.” This meaning is also supported by verses 15 and 30.
 4. King Janaka, the ruler of Mithilā, was the father of Sītā Devī and father-in-law of Lord Śrī Rāma. He was well-versed in scriptural wisdom and utterly detached. Through the performance of his socio-religious duties, he attained the spiritual abode.

CHAPTER 4

THE PATH OF TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE

JÑĀNA-YOGA

Arjuna did not want to fight, because he thought that killing would cause him to incur sin, whereas his real interest was in the attainment of liberation. Arjuna understood Kṛṣṇa's previous instructions to mean that one should acquire knowledge by renouncing actions. Consequently, in the beginning of Chapter 3, Arjuna asked Śrī Kṛṣṇa, "Why do You engage me in this terrible battle?" In reply, Kṛṣṇa emphasized the performance of selfless action. Later in the same chapter, Arjuna inquired as to what causes a person to commit sin. Kṛṣṇa responded that it is material desire that impels a person to act inauspiciously. Carrying on from this discussion, Kṛṣṇa continues to speak in Chapter 4 about *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, the discipline of selfless action, which liberates a person from material bondage. It appears that Kṛṣṇa had not completed His explanation of *karma-yoga* in Chapter 3 before he was interrupted by Arjuna's question. This is understood from the very first verse of the present chapter, in which Kṛṣṇa refers to the *yoga* that He had outlined in the previous chapter. This reference is made by use of the pronoun *imam* (this) in the very first verse.

There are forty-two verses in Chapter 4; one is spoken by Arjuna and the rest by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. While in Chapter 3, Kṛṣṇa covers the performance of action, in Chapter 4, He imparts specific knowledge about the nature of such actions. Kṛṣṇa begins the chapter by explaining that the knowledge of selfless action (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*), in spite of being beginningless,

was lost to the world over time, because of the non-availability of qualified teachers. Kṛṣṇa describes how this teaching was handed down from ancient times (1–3).

Kṛṣṇa reveals knowledge about Himself and about how He is not bound by action (5–15). He declares, “I shall now explain to you the truth of action, knowing which, you will be freed from bondage to action,” referring to liberation from the cycle of birth and death (16). He provides a detailed description of appropriate action undertaken in wisdom and how to convert such action into an offering to the Supreme without harboring attachment to the fruits of actions (17–32). Arjuna learns how *karma-yoga* leads to wisdom, as Kṛṣṇa declares, “The sacrifice through awareness is superior to that involving external articles, for all actions in their entirety, O Pārtha, culminate in awareness” (33).

Kṛṣṇa then points out the significance of approaching a teacher who has realized the truth. He instructs Arjuna in the methods of imbibing wisdom from such a teacher, urging him with the advice, *tad-viddhi*, “You are to assimilate this wisdom” (34). Kṛṣṇa sums up this discussion, saying, “In this world, there is certainly nothing as purifying as wisdom. To one fully perfected through *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, that wisdom is revealed to the self of its own accord in due course of time” (38). He concludes by requesting Arjuna once again to fulfill his duty, that is, to fight (42). Thus, *karma-yoga* leading to transcendental knowledge as the means of self-realization has been recommended here.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*imaṁ vivasvate yogam proktavān aham avyayam
vivasvān manave prāha manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *aham* — I; *proktavān* — taught; *imaṁ* — this; *avyayam* — imperishable; *yogam* — yoga; *vivasvate* — to Vivasvān [the sun god]; *vivasvān* — Vivasvān; *prāha* — spoke [it]; *manave* — unto Manu; *manuḥ* — [and] Manu; *abravīt* — conveyed [it]; *ikṣvākave* — to King Ikṣvāku.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I taught this imperishable yoga to Vivasvān, the sun god, Vivasvān spoke it to Manu, and Manu conveyed it to King Ikṣvāku. (4.1)

*evam paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa*

rāja-ṛṣayaḥ — the royal sages; *evam* — thus; *viduḥ* — understood; *imaṁ* — this [yoga of wisdom]; *prāptam* — received; *paramparā* — through sacred tradition; *parantapa* — O Arjuna, scorcher of the enemies; *mahatā kālena* — over a great lapse of time; *saḥ* — this; *yogaḥ* — yoga of wisdom; *naṣṭaḥ* — was lost; *iha* — in this world.

The royal sages thus understood this yoga of wisdom received through sacred tradition. O scorcher of enemies, over a great lapse of time, this yoga was gradually lost to the world. (4.2)

*sa evāyaṁ mayā te 'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ
bhakto 'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam*

ayam — this; *saḥ eva* — very same; *purātanaḥ* — ancient; *yogaḥ* — yoga; *proktaḥ* — has been spoken; *mayā* — by Me; *te* — to you;

adya — today; *iti* — because; *asi* — you are; *me* — My; *bhaktaḥ* — devotee; *ca* — and; *sakhā* — friend; *etat* — this [is]; *hi* — certainly; *uttamam* — the supreme; *rahasyam* — secret.

I have spoken that very ancient *yoga* to you today, because you are My devotee and friend. It is certainly the supreme secret. (4.3)

arjuna uvāca

*aparaṁ bhavato janma paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ
katham etad vijānīyāṁ tvam ādau proktavān iti*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna inquired; *bhavataḥ* — Your; *janma* — birth; *aparaṁ* — [is] recent; *janma* — [whereas] the birth; *vivasvataḥ* — of the sun god; *paraṁ* — [is] distant; *katham* — how; *vijānīyāṁ* — shall I understand; *etat* — this; *iti* — that; *tvam* — You; *proktavān* — taught [this *yoga* to him]; *ādau* — in the past.

Arjuna inquired: Your birth is recent, while Vivasvān's birth was long ago. How am I to understand that You taught this *yoga* to him in the past? (4.4)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna
tāny ahaṁ veda sarvāṇi na tvam vettha parantapa*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān replied; *arjuna* — O Arjuna; *bahūni* — many; *janmāni* — births; *me* — of Mine; *ca* — and; *tava* — of yours; *vyatītāni* — have passed; *ahaṁ* — I; *veda* — know; *tāni* — them; *sarvāṇi* — all; *tvam* — [but] you; *na vettha* — do not know them; *paraṁ-tapa* — O scorcher of the enemy.

Śrī Bhagavān replied: O Arjuna, you and I have passed through many births. I know them all, but you do not know them, O scorcher of enemies. (4.5)

*ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san
prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā*

api — although; *san* — [I] am; *ajāḥ* — birthless; *avyaya ātmā* — [although I am He] whose transcendental body [ātmā] is immutable; *api* — [and] although; *san* — [I] am; *īśvaraḥ* — the independent regulator; *bhūtānām* — of all beings; *sambhavāmi* — I appear [in this world]; *adhiṣṭhāya* — while remaining situated; *svām* — in My own; *prakṛtim* — essential form and nature; *ātma-māyayā* — through My intrinsic power.

Although I am birthless and My transcendental body is immutable, and although I am the independent regulator of all beings, I still appear [in this world], while remaining situated in My own essential form and nature, through My intrinsic power (*ātmamāyā*). (4.6)

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham*

bhārata — O descendant of Bharata; *yadā yadā hi* — whenever at all; *bhavati* — there occurs; *glāniḥ* — a decline; *dharmasya* — of righteousness; *abhyutthānam* — [and] an uprising; *adharmasya* — of unrighteousness; *tadā* — at that time; *aham* — I; *sṛjāmi* — manifest; *ātmānam* — Myself.

O Bhārata, whenever at all there occurs a decline of righteousness (*dharma*) and an uprising of unrighteousness, at that time I manifest Myself. (4.7)

*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge*

sambhavāmi—I manifest; *yuge yuge*¹—in every *yuga* or age; *paritrāṇāya*—for the protection; *sādḥūnām*—of the virtuous; *ca*—and; *vināśāya*—for the eradication; *duṣkṛtām*—of the unvirtuous; *saṁsthāpana-arthāya*—[and] for the establishment; *dharma*—[of] *dharma*.

I manifest in every *yuga*² for the protection of the virtuous, the eradication of the unvirtuous, and the establishment of *dharma*. (4.8)

*janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

arjuna—O Arjuna; *yaḥ*—a person who; *vetti*—knows; *evaṁ*—thus; *tattvataḥ*—in reality; *divyam*—the transcendental nature; *me*—[of] My; *janma*—birth; *ca*—and; *karma*—actions; *saḥ*—he; *tyaktvā*—on giving up; *dehaṁ*—the body; *na eti*—does not attain; *janma*—birth; *punaḥ*—again; *eti*—[but] attains; *mām*—Me [instead].

O Arjuna, a person who knows thus in reality the transcendental nature of My birth and actions is not reborn after giving up the body, but attains Me instead. (4.9)

*vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhā man-mayā mām upāśritāḥ
bahavo jñāna-tapasā pūtā mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ*

vīta—being freed; *rāga*—[from] attachment; *bhaya*—fear; *krodhāḥ*—[and] anger; *mat-mayāḥ*—being absorbed in Me; *upāśritāḥ*—having taken refuge; *mām*—in Me; *pūtāḥ*—[and] being purified; *jñāna*—[through] knowledge; *tapasā*—[and]

penance; *bahavaḥ*—many; *āgatāḥ*—have attained; *mat-bhāvam*—My nature.

Being completely freed from attachment, fear, and anger, being fully absorbed in Me, having taken refuge in Me and being purified through knowledge and penance, many have attained Me in the past. (4.10)

*ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*

aham—I; *bhajāmi*—reciprocate; *tān*—[with] all those; *ye*—who; *prapadyante*—seek refuge; *mām*—[in] Me; *tathā eva*—in direct correspondence with; *yathā*—the manner [of their surrender]; *manuṣyāḥ*—[since] all human beings; *anuvartante*—follow; *mama*—My; *vartma*—path; *sarvaśaḥ*—in all respects; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā.

I reciprocate with all who seek refuge in Me, in direct correspondence with the essential nature of their surrender, for all human beings [regardless of their disposition] follow My path in every respect, O son of Pṛthā. (4.11)

*kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇām siddhiṁ yajanta iha devatāḥ
kṣipram hi mānuṣe loke siddhir bhavati karma-jā*

kāṅkṣantaḥ—those seeking; *siddhiṁ*—the fruits; *karmaṇām*—of their actions; *yajante*—worship; *devatāḥ*—the gods; *hi*—because; *iha*—here; *loke*—in this world; *mānuṣe*—of human beings; *siddhiḥ*—success; *karma-jā*—born of actions; *bhavati*—comes; *kṣipram*—quickly.

People seeking the fruits of their actions worship the *devas*, because in this world of human beings, success born of

actions comes quickly. (4.12)

*cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam
guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ
tasya kartāram api mām
viddhy akartāram avyayam*

cātuḥ-varṇyam — the four divisions of human society; *sṛṣṭam* — were created; *mayā* — by Me; *vibhāgaśaḥ* — in accordance with the divisions; *guṇa* — [of] the *guṇas* of nature; *karma* — [and their corresponding] actions; *api* — although; *kartāram* — [I am] the originator; *tasya* — of that [system]; *viddhi* — know; *mām* — Me; *avyayam* — the imperishable; *akartāram* — as the non-doer.

The four divisions of human society (*varṇas*)³ were created by Me in accordance with the preponderance of the *guṇas* operative in different people and in accordance with the corresponding character of their actions. Although I am the originator of this system, know Me, the imperishable, as the non-doer [being beyond the *guṇas* and changeless]. (4.13)

*na mām karmāṇi limpanti na me karma-phale sprhā
iti mām yo 'bhijānāti karmabhir na sa badhyate*

karmāṇi — actions; *na limpanti* — do not bind; *mām* — Me; *na sprhā* — [because] there is no desire; *me* — in Me; *karma-phale* — for the fruits of actions; *yaḥ* — one who; *abhijānāti* — knows; *mām* — Me; *iti* — thus; *saḥ* — he; *na badhyate* — is not bound; *karmabhiḥ* — by actions.

Actions do not bind Me, because I am devoid of desire for the fruits of actions. One who knows Me thus is not bound by actions. (4.14)

*evam jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma pūrvair api mumukṣubhiḥ
kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvam pūrvaiḥ pūrvataram kṛtam*

evam — this; *jñātvā* — being known; *karma* — action; *kṛtam* — was participated in; *api* — even; *pūrvaiḥ* — by the ancient; *mumukṣubhiḥ* — seekers of liberation; *tasmāt* — therefore; *tvam* — you [too]; *kuru* — should perform; *karma eva* — such actions; *kṛtam* — as carried out; *pūrvaiḥ* — by the ancients; *pūrva-taram* — in the past.

Knowing this, even the ancient seekers of liberation participated in action. Therefore, you too should perform such actions as carried out by the ancients in former times. (4.15)

*kim karma kim akarmeti kavayo 'py atra mohitāḥ
tat te karma pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt*

kim — what; *karma* — [is] action; *kim* — [and] what; *akarma* — [is] inaction; *kavayaḥ api* — even the wise; *mohitāḥ* — are deluded; *iti atra* — in this particular matter; *pravakṣyāmi* — I shall [now] explain; *te* — to you; *tat* — that; *karma* — [truth of] action; *jñātvā* — knowing; *yat* — which; *mokṣyase* — you will be freed; *aśubhāt* — from bondage to action.

What is action and what is inaction? Even the wise are deluded in this regard. I shall now explain to you the truth of action, knowing which, you will be freed from bondage to action. (4.16)

*karmaṇo hy api boddhavyaṁ boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ
akarmaṇaś ca boddhavyaṁ gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ*

karmaṇaḥ api — [the truth] of prescribed action; *boddhavyam* — should be understood; *ca* — and; *vikarmaṇaḥ* — [the truth] of prohibited action; *boddhavyam* — should be understood; *ca* — and; *akarmaṇaḥ* — [the truth] of inaction; *boddhavyam* — should be understood; *hi* — because; *gatiḥ* — the internal mechanics; *karmaṇaḥ* — of action; *gahanā* — are difficult to grasp.

One should understand the truth about prescribed action, prohibited action, and inaction, since the internal mechanics of action are difficult to grasp. (4.17)

*karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyedakarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*

yaḥ — one who; *paśyet* — sees; *akarma* — inaction; *karmaṇi* — in action; *ca* — and; *yaḥ* — one who [sees]; *karma* — action; *akarmanī* — in inaction; *saḥ* — he; *buddhi-mān* — [is] wise; *manuṣyeṣu* — among human beings; *saḥ* — such a person; *yuktaḥ* — [is] established in equanimity of mind; *kṛtsna-karma-kṛt* — [and] participative in all actions.

One who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is wise among human beings. Such a person is established in equanimity of mind and participative in all manner of action. (4.18)

*yasya sarve samārambhāḥ kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ
jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇaṁ tam āhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ*

yasya — one whose; *sarve* — entire; *samārambhāḥ* — undertakings; *varjitāḥ* — are free; *saṅkalpa* — [from] the resolve; *kāma* — [for] enjoyment; *karmāṇaṁ* — [and whose] actions; *dagdha* — are burnt; *agni* — [by the] fire; *jñāna* — [of]

knowledge; *tam* — that person; *budhāḥ* — the wise; *āhuḥ* — call; *pañḍitam* — as sagacious.

One whose entire undertakings are free from the desire for enjoyment and whose actions are burnt up by the fire of knowledge, is called sagacious by the wise. (4.19)

*tyaktvā karma-phalāsaṅgam nitya-tr̥pto nirāśrayaḥ
karmany abhipravṛtto 'pi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ*

tyaktvā — having renounced; *karma-phala-āsaṅgam* — all attachment to action and its fruits; *nitya-tr̥ptaḥ* — being ever satisfied; *nirāśrayaḥ* — [and] being without dependence [on others]; *saḥ* — such a person; *kiñcit eva na karoti* — does nothing at all; *api* — even though; *abhipravṛttaḥ* — fully engaged; *karmaṇi* — in action.

Having renounced all attachment to action and its fruits, being ever satisfied and without dependence on others, such a person does nothing at all, though fully engaged in action. (4.20)

*nirāśīr yata-cittātmā tyakta-sarva-parigrahaḥ
śārīram kevalam karma kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam*

nirāśīḥ — devoid of craving [for enjoyment]; *yata* — being controlled; *citta-ātmā* — [in] mind and body; *tyakta* — [and] having relinquished; *sarva* — all; *parigrahaḥ* — sense of proprietorship over possessions; *na apnoti* — [such a person] does not incur; *kilbiṣam* — sin; *kurvan* — [even] while engaged; *karma* — [in] action; *kevalam* — simply; *śārīram* — [for maintenance of] the body.

Devoid of craving [for enjoyment], being controlled in mind and body, and having relinquished all sense of proprietorship [over all objects of enjoyment], such a person does not incur sin, even while engaged in action simply for maintenance of the body. (4.21)

*yadṛcchā-lābha-santuṣṭo dvandvātīto vimatsarah
samah siddhāv asiddhau ca kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate*

santuṣṭaḥ—content; *lābha*—[with] whatever is obtained; *yadṛcchā*—by the will of providence; *atītaḥ*—having transcended; *dvandva*—[all] duality; *vimatsarah*—being free from jealousy; *samah*—[and] composed; *siddhau*—in success; *ca*—and; *asiddhau*—failure; *na nibadhyate*—[that person] is not bound; *api*—even though; *kṛtvā*—performing [actions].

Content with whatever comes by the will of providence, having transcended all duality, being free from jealousy, and composed in success and failure, that person is not bound, even though performing actions. (4.22)

*gata-saṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita-cetasah
yajñāyācarataḥ karma samagram pravilīyate*

samagram—all; *karma*—action; *pravilīyate*—is dissolved; *gata-saṅgasya*—of one who is devoid of attachment; *muktasya*—of one who is liberated from bodily identification; *cetasah*—of one whose mind; *jñāna-avasthita*—is established in knowledge [of the self]; *ācarataḥ*—[and] of one who acts; *yajñāya*—[exclusively] for the sake of Yajña [i.e., for the worship of the Supreme Immanent Self, Parameśvara].

All action is dissolved, of one who is devoid of attachment, who is liberated from bodily identification, whose mind is

established in knowledge of the self, and who acts exclusively for the sake of Yajña [i.e., for the worship of the Supreme Immanent Self, Parameśvara]. (4.23)

*brahmārpaṇam brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahma-karma-samādhinā*

arpaṇam—the ladle; *brahma*—[is] Brahman; *haviḥ*—the oblation; *brahma*—[is] Brahman; *agnau*—the sacrificial fire in which [the offering is made]; *brahma*—[is] Brahman; *brahmaṇā*—the priest by whom [the sacrifice is performed is Brahman]; *hutam*—[and] the act of offering oblations [is Brahman]; *brahma eva*—Brahman alone; *gantavyam*—is to be attained; *tena*—by that person; *samādhinā*—whose consciousness is absorbed; *brahma-karma*—[in] sacrificial action which is of the nature of Brahman.

The ladle is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman, the sacrificial fire in which the offering is made is Brahman, the priest by whom the sacrifice is performed is Brahman, and the act of offering oblations is Brahman. Brahman alone is to be attained by that person whose consciousness is absorbed in sacrificial action which is of the nature of Brahman. (4.24)

*daivam evāpare yajñam yoginaḥ paryupāsate
brahmāgnāv apare yajñam yajñenaivopajuhvati*

apare—others; *yoginaḥ*—the *karma-yogīs*; *paryupāsate*—engage in consummate worship; *yajñam*—[through] sacrificial rites; *daivam eva*—intended exclusively for the *devas*; *apare*—others [the *jñāna-yogīs*]; *opajuhvati*—offer; *yajñam*—the oblation [in the form of the self]; *agnau*—in the fire; *brahma*—

[of] Brahman; *yajñena eva* — simply by the sacrifice [of uttering Praṇava].

Others, the *karma-yogīs*, engage in consummate worship through sacrificial rites intended exclusively for the *devas*. Others [the *jñāna-yogīs*] offer the self (*yajña*) into the fire of Brahman simply by the sacrificial utterance of Praṇava⁴ (*yajña*). (4.25)

*śrotrādīnīndriyāṇy anye saṁyamāgniṣu juhvati
śabdādīn viṣayān anyā indriyāgniṣu juhvati*

anye — others; *juhvati* — offer; *indriyāṇi* — the sense faculties; *śrotra-ādīni* — such as hearing and so on; *agniṣu* — into the fires; *saṁyama* — [of] self-discipline; *anye* — others; *juhvati* — offer; *viṣayān* — the objects of perception; *śabda-ādīn* — such as sound vibration and so on; *agniṣu* — into the fires; *indriya* — [of] the sense organs.

Others offer the sense faculties, such as hearing and so on, into the fire of self-discipline. Others again offer the objects of perception, such as sound and so on, into the fire of the senses. (4.26)

*sarvāṇīndriya-karmāṇi prāṇa-karmāṇi cāpare
ātma-saṁyama-yogāgnau juhvati jñāna-dīpīte*

apare — others; *juhvati* — offer; *sarvāṇi* — all; *indriya-karmāṇi* — the functions of the sense faculties; *ca* — and; *prāṇa-karmāṇi* — the functions of the vital life currents; *agnau* — into the fire; *yoga* — [of the] yoga; *ātma-saṁyama* — [of] self-control; *jñāna-dīpīte* — [which is] ignited by wisdom.

Still others offer all the functions of the sense faculties and of the vital life currents into the fire of the *yoga* of self-control, which is ignited by wisdom. (4.27)

*dravya-yajñās tapo-yajñā yoga-yajñās tathāpare
svādhyāya-jñāna-yajñāś ca yatayaḥ saṁśita-vratāḥ*

[some people]; *dravya-yajñāḥ*—[perform] *yajña* by offering articles in charity; [others]; *tapāḥ-yajñāḥ*—[perform] *yajña* by undertaking penance; [others]; *yoga-yajñāḥ*—[perform] *yajña* in the form of the classical *yoga* discipline; *ca*—while; *tathā apare*—others still; *jñāna-yajñāḥ*—[engage in] *yajña* through cultivation of wisdom; *svādhyāya*—by study of the Vedas; [all these performers]; *yatayaḥ*—who are perseverant [in their practices]; *saṁśita-vratāḥ*—[are] observant of austere vows.

Some people perform *yajña* by offering articles in charity, others perform *yajña* by undertaking penance, others do so through the classical *yoga* discipline, while others still engage in *yajña* through cultivation of wisdom by study of the Vedas. All of these performers, who are perseverant in their practices, observe austere vows. (4.28)

*apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe 'pānam tathāpare
prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇāḥ*

apare—others; *parāyaṇāḥ*—who are devoted; *prāṇāyāma*—[to] the regulation of the vital force; *ruddhvā*—while restraining; *gatī*—the movement; *prāṇa*—[of] the ascending vital current; *apāna*—[and of] the descending vital current; *juhvati*—offer; *prāṇam*—the ascending vital current; *apāne*—into the descending vital force; *tathā*—and; *apānam*—the

descending vital current; *prāṇe*—into the ascending vital force.

Others, who are devoted to the regulation of the vital force (*prāṇāyama*),⁵ while restraining the movements of the ascending and descending vital currents, offer the ascending current into the descending force and the descending current into the ascending force. (4.29)

*apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati
sarve 'py ete yajña-vido yajña-kṣapita-kalmaṣāḥ
yajña-śiṣṭāmṛta-bhujo yānti brahma sanātanam*

apare—others; *niyata*—regulating; *āhārāḥ*—their intake of food; *juhvati*—sacrifice; *prāṇān*—the functions of the senses; *prāṇeṣu*—into the vital life currents [which enable the sense operations]; *api*—indeed; *sarve*—all; *ete*—these; *yajña-vidāḥ*—knowers of *yajña*; *kalmaṣāḥ*—whose unmeritorious acts; *yajña-kṣapita*—are purified by *yajña*; *amṛta-bhujaḥ*—[and] who partake in the ambrosia; *yajña-śiṣṭa*—[of] the remnants of *yajña*; *yānti*—attain; *sanātanam*—the eternal; *brahma*—Brahman, the Supreme Absolute.

Others, who regulate their intake of food, sacrifice the functions of the senses into the vital life currents [which enable the sense operations]. Indeed, all these knowers of *yajña*, who are purified of their unmeritorious acts through the performance of *yajña* and who partake in the ambrosial remnants of *yajña*, attain the eternal Brahman, the Supreme Absolute. (4.30–31a)

nāyaṁ loko 'sty ayajñasya kuto 'nyaḥ kuru-sattama

kuru-sat-tama—O best among the Kurus; *ayam*—[even] this; *lokaḥ*—[human] world [of meager pleasure]; *na asti*—is inaccessible; *ayajñasya*—[for] one who does not perform *yajña*; *kutaḥ*—what to speak of; *anyaḥ*—the other [the heavenly world of celestial pleasure].

O best of the Kurus, even this human world of meager pleasure is inaccessible for one who does not perform *yajña*, what to speak of the other heavenly world of celestial pleasure. (4.31b)

*evam bahu-vidhā yajñā vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe
karma-jān viddhi tān sarvān evaṁ jñātvā vimokṣyase*

evam—in this way; *bahu-vidhāḥ*—many types; *yajñāḥ*—[of] *yajña*; *vitatāḥ*—are propounded; *mukhe*—through the mouth; *brahmaṇaḥ*—of the Vedas; *viddhi*—know; *sarvān*—all; *tān*—[of] them; *karma-jān*—as originating from actions [of speech, mind, and body]; *jñātvā*—knowing; *evam*—thus; *vimokṣyase*—you will be freed [from bondage to action].

In this way, many types of *yajñas* are propounded by the Vedas. Know all of them to originate from the actions of speech, mind, and body. Knowing this truth, you will be freed from bondage to action. (4.32)

*śreyān dravya-mayād yajñāj jñāna-yajñaḥ parantapa
sarvaṁ karmākhilam pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate*

param-tapa—O scorcher of enemies; *jñāna-yajñaḥ*—the sacrifice through awareness; *śreyān*—is superior; *yajñāt*—to the sacrifice; *dravya-mayāt*—involving external objects; [since]; *sarvam*—all; *karma*—actions; *akhilam*—in their

entirety; *pārtha* — O son of Pṛthā; *parisamāpyate* — culminate; *jñāne* — in awareness.

O scorcher of enemies, the sacrifice through awareness is superior to that involving external articles, for all actions in their entirety, O Pārtha, culminate in awareness. (4.33)

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

viddhi — assimilate; *tat* — this [wisdom]; *praṇipātena* — through self-submission; *paripraśnena* — through in-depth inquiry; *sevayā* — [and] through unconditional service; *darśinaḥ* — the seers; *tattva* — [of] the truth; *jñāninaḥ* — who are established in enlightened awareness; *upadekṣyanti* — will instruct; *te* — you; *jñānam* — in this wisdom.

You are to assimilate this wisdom through self-submission, in-depth inquiry, and unconditional service. The truth-seers who are established in enlightened awareness will instruct you in this wisdom. (4.34)

*yaj jñātvā na punar moham evaṁ yāsyasi pāṇḍava
yena bhūtāny aśeṣāṇi drakṣyasi ātmany atho mayi*

pāṇḍava — O son of Pāṇḍu; *jñātvā* — having imbibed; *yat* — which [i.e., this wisdom]; *punaḥ na yāsyasi* — you shall never again be subject to; *evam* — this type of; *moham* — delusion; *yena* — by this [wisdom]; *drakṣyasi* — you will directly perceive; *aśeṣāṇi* — all; *bhūtāni* — living forms [the conditional forms superimposed on the self, such as those of human beings, animals, and so on]; *ātmani* — [as situated] in the self [the *jīvātmā*]; *atha* — and thereafter; *mayi* — [as situated] in Me.

O Arjuna, having imbibed this wisdom, you will never again be subject to this type of delusion. By this [wisdom], you will directly perceive all living forms as situated in the self [the *jīvātmā*] and thereafter as situated in Me. (4.35)

*api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛt-tamaḥ
sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva vṛjinam santariṣyasi*

api—even; *cet*—if; *asi*—you are; *pāpa-kṛt-tamaḥ*—the greatest sinner; *sarvebhyaḥ*—among all; *pāpebhyaḥ*—sinners; *santariṣyasi*—you will cross over; *sarvam*—[the ocean of] all; *vṛjinam*—sin; *jñāna-plavena eva*—verily by the boat of wisdom.

Even if you are the worst of all sinners, you will cross over the ocean of all sin verily by the boat of wisdom. (4.36)

*yathaidhāṁsi samiddho 'gnir bhasma-sāt kurute 'rjuna
jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasma-sāt kurute tathā*

arjuna—O Arjuna; *yathā*—just as; *samiddhaḥ*—a blazing; *agniḥ*—fire; *kurute*—turns; *edhāṁsi*—firewood; *bhasma-sāt*—into ashes; *tathā*—similarly; *jñāna-agniḥ*—the fire of wisdom; *kurute*—turns; *sarva-karmāṇi*—all actions; *bhasma-sāt*—to ashes.

O Arjuna, just as a blazing fire turns wood into ashes, so the fire of wisdom reduces all actions to ashes. (4.37)

*na hi jñānena sadṛśam pavitram iha vidyate
tat svayaṁ yoga-saṁsiddhaḥ kālenātmāni vindati*

iha—in this world; *na hi vidyate*—there is nothing at all; *pavitram*—[as] purifying; *sadṛśam*—as; *jñānena*—wisdom;

saṁsiddhaḥ—[to] one fully perfected; *yoga*—[through] *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*; *tat*—that [wisdom]; *vindati*—is discovered [i.e., revealed]; *ātmani*—in the self; *svayam*—of its own accord; *kālena*—in due course of time.

In this world, there is nothing at all as purifying as wisdom. To one fully perfected through *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, that wisdom is revealed to the self of its own accord in due course of time. (4.38)

*śraddhāvān⁶ labhate jñānam tat-paraḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ
jñānam labdhvā parāṁ śāntim acireṇādhigacchati*

śraddhāvān—one who is endowed with faith; *tat-paraḥ*—who is singularly devoted to that [i.e., *niṣkāma-karma*]; *indriyaḥ*—[and] whose senses; *saṁyata*—are fully regulated; *labhate*—attains; *jñānam*—wisdom; *labdhvā*—[and] on the attainment; *jñānam*—[of such] wisdom; [that person]; *acireṇa*—immediately; *adhigacchati*—obtains; *parāṁ*—supreme; *śāntim*—peace.

One who is endowed with faith, who is singularly devoted to this practice [of *niṣkāma-karma*], and whose senses are fully regulated, attains wisdom; and on the realization of such wisdom, that person immediately obtains supreme peace. (4.39)

*ajñāś cāśraddadhānaś ca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyaṁ loko 'sti na paro na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanaḥ*

ajñāḥ—one who is ignorant; *ca*—and; *āśraddadhānaḥ*—devoid of faith; *ca*—and; *ātmā*—whose heart; *saṁśaya*—[is seized by] doubt; *vinaśyati*—is ruined; *ātmanaḥ*—for the self; *saṁśaya*—[who is afflicted by] doubt; *na*—neither; *ayam*—

this; *lokaḥ* — world; *na* — nor; *paraḥ* — the heavenly world beyond; *na* — nor; *sukham* — happiness; *asti* — exists.

One who is ignorant, devoid of faith, and whose heart is seized by doubt is ruined. For the self who is afflicted by doubt, neither this world, nor the heavenly world beyond, nor happiness exists. (4.40)

*yoga-sannyasta-karmāṇaṁ jñāna-sañchinna-saṁśayam
ātmavantam na karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya*

dhanam-jaya — O conqueror of riches, Arjuna; *karmāṇi* — actions; *na nibadhnanti* — do not bind; [the person]; *karmāṇaṁ* — whose fruitive actions; *sannyasta* — have been relinquished; *yoga* — through the *yoga* of selfless action [*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*]; *saṁśayam* — whose doubt; *sañchinna* — has been cut; *jñāna* — by wisdom; *ātma-vantam* — [and] who has realized the self.

O Arjuna, actions have no binding power over the person whose fruitive actions have been relinquished through the *yoga* of selfless action [*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*], whose doubts have been slashed by wisdom, and who has realized the self. (4.41)

*tasmād ajñāna-sambhūtaṁ hṛt-sthaṁ jñānāsinātmanaḥ
chittvainaṁ saṁśayam yogam ātiṣṭhottiṣṭha bhārata*

tasmāt — therefore; *bhārata* — O descendant of Bharata; *chittvā* — cutting to pieces; *asinā* — with the sword; *jñāna* — of wisdom; *enam* — this; *saṁśayam* — doubt; *hṛt-sthaṁ* — lodged in the heart; *ajñāna-sambhūtam* — born of ignorance; *ātmanaḥ* — of the self; *ātiṣṭha* — become established; *yogam* — in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*; *uttiṣṭha* — [and] stand up [to fight].

Therefore, O Arjuna, cutting to pieces with the sword of wisdom this doubt lodged in your heart born of ignorance of the self, become established in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and stand up to fight. (4.42)



1. In Sanskrit, when a noun is repeated it signifies universal distribution of the noun in question, conveying the sense of “every.”

2. In Vedic culture, time is cyclic and is broadly divided into four ages called *yugas*, namely, Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali.

3. Vedic society was divided into four social classes called *varṇas*, namely, the *brāhmaṇas*, who were devoted to the culture of knowledge, the *kṣatriyas*, the ruler and warrior class, the *vaiśyas*, businessmen and farmers, and the *sūdras*, the labor class. This division was based on the disposition and aptitude of the individual members who made up the society. All four classes worked together for the spiritual advancement of society.

4. Praṇava is the primordial sound vibration called Om.

5. *Prāṇāyāma* means the regulation or expansion of the vital force (*prāṇa*) in the body. This is accomplished by regulation of the breath, which is the prime carrier of the vital force. The one indivisible *prāṇa* functions in five capacities within the body, and hence it is understood to be of five types, namely, *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *udāna*, and *vyāna*.

6. When a word, such as *śraddhāvān*, ending with “n” is followed by a word with an initial “l,” the final “n” is replaced with an *anunāsika* (i.e., nasal) “l.” This rare *anunāsika* form is represented in the transliteration as “ṁl” (*anusvāra* + “l”). See also 18.17 and 18.71.

CHAPTER 5

THE PATH OF RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

KARMA-SANNYĀSA-YOGA

There are twenty-nine verses in this chapter. The first verse is Arjuna's question, and the rest are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's reply. Having heard the glory of both *jñāna-yoga* and *karma-yoga*, as well as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's recommendation to cultivate wisdom and perform his duty, Arjuna could not decide which of the two disciplines to follow.

In verse 40 of the previous chapter, Kṛṣṇa specifically described the miserable plight of a practitioner whose mind is filled with doubt. Thus, to eliminate his doubt, Arjuna asks Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this chapter, which of the two, the discipline of knowledge or the discipline of motiveless action, is better. Kṛṣṇa replies, "Both the renunciation of action and the *yoga* of selfless action lead to ultimate welfare, but of the two, the *yoga* of selfless action is superior" (2).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa elaborates on this topic (3–26) and then describes the discipline of meditation (27–28): "Shutting out all thoughts of external sense objects, fixing the gaze between the eyebrows, regulating the outgoing and incoming breaths flowing within the nostrils, the sage who has restrained his senses, mind, and intellect, who is free from desire, fear, and anger, and who is dedicated to the attainment of liberation, is indeed ever liberated." This discipline is helpful both on the path of knowledge as well as the path of action, and also leads to supreme bliss. Śrī Kṛṣṇa concludes the chapter by announcing, "Knowing Me as the recipient of all sacrifices (*yajña*) and

austerities, as the master of all worlds, and as the well-wisher of all living beings, a person attains peace” (29).

arjuna uvāca

*sannyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa punar yogam ca śaṁsasi
yac chreya etayor ekaṁ tan me brūhi su-niścitam*

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *kṛṣṇa*—O Kṛṣṇa; *sannyāsam*—[having instructed me in] the renunciation; *karmaṇām*—of actions; *punaḥ śaṁsasi*—You again recommend; *yogam*—*karma-yoga*; *ca*—as well; *brūhi*—please tell; *me*—[to] me; *su-niścitam*—decisively; *tat*—that; *ekam*—one [path]; *yat*—which; *śreyaḥ*—[is] most beneficial; *etayoḥ*—of these two.

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, after instructing me in the renunciation of action, You are again recommending the *yoga* of selfless action (*karma-yoga*) as well. Please tell me decisively which one of these two is most beneficial. (5.1)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*sannyāsaḥ karma-yogaś ca niḥśreyasa-karāv ubhau
tayos tu karma-sannyāsāt karma-yogo viśiṣyate*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *ubhau*—both; *sannyāsaḥ*—the renunciation of action; *ca*—and; *karma-yogaḥ*—the *yoga* of selfless action; *niḥśreyasa-karau*—lead to ultimate welfare; *tu*—but; *tayoḥ*—of the two; *karma-yogaḥ*—the *yoga* of selfless action; *viśiṣyate*—is superior; *karma-sannyāsāt*—to the renunciation of action.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Both the renunciation of action and the *yoga* of selfless action lead to ultimate welfare, but of the two, the *yoga* of selfless action is superior to the renunciation of action. (5.2)

*jñeyah sa nitya-sannyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati
nirdvandvo hi mahā-bāho sukhaṁ bandhāt pramucyate*

saḥ—he [the *karma-yogī*]; *yaḥ*—who; *na*—never; *dveṣṭi*—hates; *na*—nor; *kāṅkṣati*—desires [anything]; *jñeyah*—should be understood; *sannyāsī*—[as] one established in renunciation; *nitya*—at every moment [even in the midst of action]; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed; *hi*—because; *nirdvandvaḥ*—the person who is free from duality; *sukhaṁ pramucyate*—is easily liberated; *bandhāt*—from bondage.

The *karma-yogī* who never hates nor desires anything should be understood as one established in renunciation at every moment [even in the midst of action], O mighty-armed, because the person who is free from duality is easily liberated from bondage. (5.3)

*sāṅkhya-yogau prthag bālāḥ pravādanti na paṇḍitāḥ
ekam apy āsthitaḥ samyag ubhayor vindate phalam*

bālāḥ—the inexperienced; *pravādanti*—claim; *sāṅkhya*—that *sāṅkhya-yoga* [the path of renunciation of action]; *yogau*—[and] *karma-yoga* [the path of selfless action]; *prthag*—are independent paths; *na*—[but] not; *paṇḍitāḥ*—the wise; *samyak āsthitaḥ*—[because] a person who is firmly established; *ekam api*—even in just one [of the two]; *vindate*—attains; *phalam*—the fruit; *ubhayor*—of both.

The inexperienced claim that the path of renunciation of action (*sāṅkhya-yoga*) and the path of selfless action (*karma-yoga*) are independent paths. The wise, however, do not support this conclusion, because a person who is firmly established even in just one of the two attains the fruit of both. (5.4)

*yat sāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānam tad yogair api gamyate
ekam sāṅkhyam ca yogam ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati*

sthānam—the state; *yat*—which; *prāpyate*—is achieved; *sāṅkhyaiḥ*—by means of *sāṅkhya-yoga* [i.e., renunciation]; *tat*—that [very state]; *gamyate*—is attained; *yogaiḥ*—by selfless action (*karma-yoga*); *api*—as well; *yaḥ*—one who; *paśyati*—perceives; *sāṅkhyam ca*—both the path of renunciation (*sāṅkhya-yoga*); *yogam ca*—and the path of selfless action (*karma-yoga*); *ekam*—as one; *saḥ*—he; *paśyati*—actually sees.

The state which is achieved by means of renunciation (*sāṅkhya-yoga*) is attained by selfless action (*karma-yoga*) as well. One who perceives both the path of renunciation and that of selfless action as one and the same, sees things as they really are. (5.5)

*sannyāsas tu mahā-bāho duḥkham āptum ayogataḥ
yoga-yukto munir brahma na cireṇādhigacchati*

mahā-bāho—O mighty-armed one; *ayogataḥ*—without selfless action (*karma-yoga*); *sannyāsaḥ*—the renunciation of action; *duḥkham*—is difficult; *āptum*—to attain; *tu*—but; *munir*—the sage; *yoga-yuktaḥ*—who adheres to selfless action (*karma-yoga*); *adhigacchati*—attains; *brahma*—Brahman; *na cireṇa*—without delay.

O mighty-armed, without selfless action (*karma-yoga*), the renunciation of action is difficult to attain. But the sage who adheres to selfless action attains Brahman without delay. (5.6)

*yoga-yukto viśuddhātmā vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ
sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtātmā kurvann api na lipyate*

yoga-yuktaḥ—one who adheres to the path of selfless action (*karma-yoga*); *viśuddha-ātmā*—who is pure in heart; *vijita-ātmā*—who has conquered his mind; *jita-indriyaḥ*—who has conquered his senses; *ātma-bhūta-ātmā*—[and] whose self has become the self [i.e., is as dear as the self]; *sarva-bhūta*—[to] all living beings; *na lipyate*—is never tainted; *kurvan api*—even while engaged in action.

One who adheres to the path of selfless action (*karma-yoga*), who is pure in heart, who has conquered his mind and senses, and who is as dear as the self to all living beings is never tainted, even while engaged in action. (5.7)

*naiva kiñcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattva-vit
paśyañ śṛṇvan spṛśañ jighrann aśnan gacchan svapan śvasan
pralapan viśṛjan grhṇann unmiṣan nemiṣann api
indriyāṇīndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan*

yuktaḥ—the person who is united through selfless action (*karma-yoga*); *tattva-vit*—[and] who has directly realized the truth; *dhārayan*—ascertains; *iti*—thus; *api*—[that] even; *paśyan*—while seeing; *śṛṇvan*—hearing; *spṛśan*—touching; *jighran*—smelling; *aśnan*—eating; *gacchan*—walking; *svapan*—sleeping; *śvasan*—breathing; *pralapan*—speaking; *viśṛjan*—excreting; *grhṇan*—grasping; *unmiṣan*—opening the eyelids; *nemiṣan*—[and] closing the eyelids; *indriyāṇi*—the senses [alone]; *vartante*—are engaged; *indriya-artheṣu*—with their respective sense objects; *iti manyeta*—he thus reflects; *na karomi*—I do nothing; *kiñcit eva*—at all.

The person who is united through selfless action and who has directly realized the truth ascertains that even while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, excreting, grasping, and opening and

closing the eyelids, it is only the senses that are engaged with their respective sense objects. He therefore reflects, “I do nothing at all.” (5.8–9)

*brahmaṇy ādhāya karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā karoti yaḥ
lipyate na sa pāpena padma-patram ivāmbhasā*

yaḥ—one who; *karoti*—participates [in action]; *ādhāya*—having dedicated; *karmāṇi*—[his] actions; *brahmaṇi*—to God [Parameśvara]; *tyaktvā*—[and] having abandoned; *saṅgam*—attachment [to action and its fruit]; *saḥ*—he; *na lipyate*—is not tainted; *pāpena*—by sin; *padma-patram iva*—like a lotus leaf; *ambhasā*—[unmoistened] by water.

One who participates in action, having dedicated his actions to God and having abandoned all attachment to action and its fruit, is not tainted by sin, just as a lotus leaf remains unmoistened by water. (5.10)

*kāyena manasā buddhyā kevalair indriyair api
yoginaḥ karma kurvanti saṅgam tyaktvātma-śuddhaye*

yoginaḥ—the *karma-yogīs*; *tyaktvā*—giving up; *saṅgam*—attachment; *kurvanti*—perform; *karma*—action; *kāyena*—through the body; *manasā*—through the mind; *buddhyā*—through the intellect; *indriyaiḥ api*—[and] even through the senses; *kevalaiḥ*—alone; *śuddhaye*—for purification; *ātma*—of the self.

The *karma-yogīs*, giving up attachment, perform action through the body, the mind, the intellect, and even through the senses alone for self-purification. (5.11)

*yuktaḥ karma-phalaṁ tyaktvā śāntim āpnoti naiṣṭhikīm
ayuktaḥ kāma-kāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate*

tyaktvā—having abandoned; *karma-phalam*—the fruits of action; *yuktaḥ*—the person who is united through selfless action (*karma-yoga*); *āpnoti*—attains; *naiṣṭhikīm*—everlasting; *śāntim*—peace; *ayuktaḥ*—[but] a selfish worker; *kāma-kāreṇa*—being impelled by desire; *saktaḥ*—[and] thus attached; *phale*—to the fruits of action; *nibadhyate*—remains bound.

Having abandoned the fruits of action, the person who is united through selfless action attains everlasting peace. But a selfish worker, being impelled by desire and thus attached to the fruits of action, remains bound. (5.12)

*sarva-karmāṇi manasā sannyasyāste sukhaṁ vaśī
nava-dvāre pure dehī naiva kurvan na kārayan*

manasā sannyasya—having mentally renounced; *sarva*—all; *karmāṇi*—actions; *dehī*—the embodied self; *vaśī*—who has subdued the body and mind; *āste*—resides; *sukham*—happily; *pure*—in the city; *nava-dvāre*—of nine gates; *na eva*—neither; *kurvan*—acting; *na*—nor; *kārayan*—causing to act.

Having mentally renounced all actions, the embodied self who has subdued the body and mind resides happily in the city of nine gates,¹ neither acting nor causing to act. (5.13)

*na kartṛtvam na karmāṇi lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ
na karma-phala-saṁyogam svabhāvas tu pravartate*

prabhuḥ—God; *na sṛjati*—does not generate; *lokasya*—the living being's; *kartṛtvam*—sense of agency; *na*—nor; *karmāṇi*—[its] actions; *na*—nor; *saṁyogam*—[its] concordance; *karma-*

phala—[with] the fruits of action; *svabhāvaḥ tu*—rather, it is the living being’s phenomenal nature; *pravartate*—that is effective [in this regard].

God does not generate the living being’s sense of agency, nor its actions, nor its concordance with the fruits of actions. Rather, it is the living being’s phenomenal nature that is effective in this regard.² (5.14)

*nādatte kasyacit pāpaṁ na caiva sukṛtaṁ vibhuḥ
ajñānenāvṛtaṁ jñāna tena muhyanti jantavaḥ*

vibhuḥ—the omnipresent God; *na ādatte*—does not appropriate [i.e., become implicated in]; *pāpaṁ*—the sin; *na ca eva*—nor either; *su-kṛtaṁ*—the piety; *kasyacit*—of anyone; *jantavaḥ*—the living beings; [however]; *muhyanti*—are deluded; *tena*—due to the fact that; *jñānam*—[their] discernment; *āvṛtaṁ*—is covered; *ajñānena*—by ignorance.

The omnipresent God does not become implicated in the sin or piety of anyone. The living beings, however, are deluded due to the fact that their discernment is covered by ignorance. (5.15)

*jñānena tu tad ajñānaṁ yeṣāṁ nāśitam ātmanaḥ
teṣāṁ āditya-vaj jñānaṁ prakāśayati tat param*

tu—but; *yeṣāṁ*—those for whom; *tat*—such; *ajñānam*—ignorance; *nāśitam*—has been dispelled; *jñānena*—by immediate awareness; *ātmanaḥ*—of the self; *teṣāṁ*—their; *jñānam*—awareness; *prakāśayati*—reveals; *tat param*—the Supreme Transcendent; *āditya-vat*—just as the sun [illuminates the world].

But those for whom such ignorance has been dispelled by immediate awareness of the self—their awareness reveals the Supreme Transcendent, just as the sun illuminates the world. (5.16)

*tad-buddhayaḥ tad-ātmānaḥ tan-niṣṭhāḥ tat-parāyaṇāḥ
gacchanty apunar-āvṛttiṁ jñāna-nirdhūta-kalmaṣāḥ*

tad-buddhayaḥ—those whose intelligence is firmly fixed on Him; *tad-ātmānaḥ*—whose minds are absorbed in meditation on Him; *tan-niṣṭhāḥ*—who have firm faith in Him; *tat-parāyaṇāḥ*—who are intently devoted to Him; *kalmaṣāḥ*—[and] whose sins; *nirdhūta*—have been expunged; *jñāna*—by immediate awareness [of God]; *gacchanti*—attain; *apunaḥ-āvṛttiṁ*—the state of no return.

Those whose intelligence is firmly fixed on Him [God], whose minds are absorbed in meditation on Him, who have firm faith in Him, who are intently devoted to Him, and whose sins have been expunged by immediate awareness [of God], attain the state of no return. (5.17)

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śva-pāke ca paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

paṇḍitāḥ—those established in true wisdom; *sama-darśinaḥ*—regard with equal vision; *brāhmaṇe*—a *brāhmaṇa*; *sampanne*—endowed with; *vidyā*—education; *vinaya*—and humility; *gavi*—a cow; *hastini*—an elephant; *śuni ca eva*—and indeed a dog; *ca*—and; *śva-pāke*—a dog-eater [the outcaste].

Those established in true wisdom regard with equal vision a *brāhmaṇa* endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater. (5.18)

*ihaiva tair jitaḥ sargo yeṣāṁ sāmye sthitaṁ manaḥ
nirdoṣaṁ hi samaṁ brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ*

yeṣāṁ—for those whose; *manaḥ*—minds; *sthitaṁ*—are established; *sāmye*—in equanimity; *sargaḥ*—material bondage; *jitaḥ*—is overcome; *taiḥ*—by them; *eva*—even; *iha*—[while present] in this world; *hi*—because; *brahma*—Brahman; *nirdoṣaṁ*—[is] flawless; *samaṁ*—[and is Itself] the state of equanimity; *tasmāt*—for this reason; *te*—they [those endowed with equal vision]; *sthitāḥ*—are situated; *brahmaṇi*—in Brahman [the nondual Absolute Reality].

For those whose minds are established in equanimity, material bondage is overcome even while they are present in this world, because Brahman is flawless and is Itself the state of equanimity. For this reason, those endowed with equal vision are situated in Brahman [the nondual Absolute Reality]. (5.19)

*na prahr̥ṣyet priyaṁ prāpya nodvijet prāpya cāpriyam
sthira-buddhir asammūḍho brahma-vid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ*

brahma-vit—the knower of the Absolute; *sthitaḥ*—who is established; *brahmaṇi*—in Brahman; *sthira-buddhiḥ*—whose intelligence is stable; *asammūḍhaḥ*—[and] who is undeluded; *na prahr̥ṣyet*—is neither elated; *prāpya*—by obtaining; *priyam*—what is pleasant; *na ca udvijet*—nor perturbed; *prāpya*—by obtaining; *apriyam*—what is unpleasant.

The knower of the Absolute, who is established in Brahman, whose intelligence is stable and who is undeluded, is neither elated by obtaining what is pleasant nor perturbed by obtaining what is unpleasant. (5.20)

*bāhya-sparśeṣv asaktātmā vindaty ātmani yat sukham
sa brahma-yoga-yuktātmā sukham akṣayam aśnute*

asakta-ātmā — one whose psyche is detached; *bāhya-sparśeṣu* — from the external sense objects; *vindati* — attains; *sukham* — [that] bliss; *yat* — which; *ātmani* — is intrinsic to the self; *saḥ* — such a person; *brahma-yoga-yukta-ātmā* — whose self is united with God through devotional absorption; *aśnute* — tastes; *akṣayam* — imperishable; *sukham* — bliss.

One whose psyche is detached from the external sense objects attains that bliss which is intrinsic to the self. Such a person, whose self is united with God through devotional absorption, tastes imperishable bliss. (5.21)

*ye hi saṁsparśa-jā bhogā duḥkha-yonaya eva te
ādy-antavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ*

kaunteya — O son of Kuntī; *bhogāḥ* — all enjoyments; *ye* — which; *saṁsparśa-jāḥ* — [are] born of sense contacts; *te hi* — they indeed; *yonayaḥ eva* — [are] only sources; *duḥkha* — [of] misery; *ādi-antavantaḥ* — having a beginning and an end; [therefore]; *budhaḥ* — the wise; *na ramate* — do not indulge; *teṣu* — in them.

O son of Kuntī, all enjoyments born of sense contacts are only sources of misery, having a beginning and an end. Therefore, the wise do not indulge in them. (5.22)

*śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhum prāk śarīra-vimokṣaṇāt
kāma-krodhodbhavam vegam sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ*

yaḥ — one who; *iha eva* — in this very life; *prāk* — before; *vimokṣaṇāt* — casting off; *śarīra* — the body; *śaknoti* — is able;

soḍhum —to tolerate; *vegam* —the urges; *udbhavam* —arising from; *kāma* —desire; *krodha* —[and] anger; *saḥ* —he; *yuktaḥ* —[is] situated in equanimity of mind; [and]; *saḥ* —he; *sukhī naraḥ* —[is] a happy person.

One who, in this very life before casting off the body, is able to tolerate the urges arising from desire and anger, is situated in equanimity of mind and is a happy person. (5.23)

*yo 'ntaḥ-sukho 'ntar-ārāmas tathāntar-jyotir eva yaḥ
sa yogī brahma-nirvāṇaṁ brahma-bhūto 'dhigacchati*

yaḥ —the person; *antaḥ-sukhaḥ* —whose happiness is within; *antaḥ-ārāmaḥ* —whose enjoyment is within; *tathā* —and; *yaḥ* —who; *antaḥ-jyotiḥ eva* —[is] indeed illumined within; *saḥ yogī* —such a *yogī*; *brahma-bhūtaḥ* —who has realized Brahman; *adhigacchati* —attains; *brahma-nirvāṇam* —liberation in the Absolute.

One whose happiness is within, whose enjoyment is within, and who is indeed illumined within —such a *yogī* who has realized Brahman attains liberation in the Absolute (*brahma-nirvāṇa*). (5.24)

*labhante brahma-nirvāṇam ṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇa-kalmaṣāḥ
chinna-dvaidhā yatātmānaḥ sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ*

ṛṣayaḥ —the sages; *kṣīṇa-kalmaṣāḥ* —whose sins have waned; *dvaidhāḥ* —whose doubts; *chinna* —have been dispelled; *yata-ātmānaḥ* —whose minds have been brought under control; *ratāḥ* —[and] who are engaged; *hite* —in the welfare; *sarva-bhūta* —of all living beings; *labhante* —attain; *brahma-nirvāṇam* —liberation in the form of Brahman.

The sages, whose sins have waned, whose doubts have been dispelled, whose minds have been brought under control, and who are engaged in the welfare of all beings, attain liberation in the form of Brahman. (5.25)

*kāma-krodha-vimuktānām yatīnām yata-cetasām
abhito brahma-nirvāṇam vartate veditātmanām*

yatīnām—for those ascetics; *vimuktānām*—who are free; *kāma*—[from] desire; *krodha*—[and] anger; *yata-cetasām*—who have subdued their minds; *vidita-ātmanām*—[and] who have realized the self; *brahma-nirvāṇam*—liberation in Brahman; *vartate*—is present; *abhiṭaḥ*—on both sides [i.e., while living and after death].

For those ascetics who are free from desire and anger, who have subdued their minds, and who have realized the self, liberation in Brahman (*brahma-nirvāṇa*) is present both while living and after death. (5.26)

*sparsān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāṁś cakṣuś caivāntare bhruvoḥ
prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantara-cāriṇau
yatendriya-mano-buddhir munir mokṣa-parāyaṇaḥ
vigatecchā-bhaya-krodho yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ*

kṛtvā—keeping; *bahiḥ*—out; *bāhyān*—the external; *sparsān*—sense objects; *ca eva*—and indeed; [fixing]; *cakṣuḥ*—the eyes; *antare*—between; *bhruvoḥ*—the eyebrows; *samau kṛtvā*—[and] regulating; *prāṇa-apānau*—the outgoing and incoming breaths; *cāriṇau*—flowing; *nāsa-abhyantara*—within the nostrils; *munir*—the sage; *yaḥ*—who; *yata*—has restrained; *indriya*—the senses; *manaḥ*—mind; *buddhiḥ*—[and] intellect; *parāyaṇaḥ*—who is dedicated; *mokṣa*—to liberation; *vigata*—

[and] who is free; *icchā* — [from] desire; *bhaya* — fear; *krodhaḥ* — [and] anger; *saḥ* — he; *muktaḥ eva* — [is] indeed liberated; *sadā* — always.

Shutting out all thoughts of external sense objects, fixing the gaze between the eyebrows,³ and regulating the outgoing and incoming breaths flowing within the nostrils, the sage who has restrained his senses, mind, and intellect, who is dedicated to the attainment of liberation, and who is free from desire, fear, and anger, is indeed ever liberated. (5.27–28)

***bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhrdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati***

jñātvā — knowing; *mām* — Me; *bhoktāram* — [as] the beneficiary; *yajña* — of all sacrifices; *tapasām* — [and] austerities; *mahā-īśvaram* — [as] the Supreme Master; *sarva-loka* — of all worlds; *su-hṛdam* — [and as] the well-wisher; *sarva* — of all; *bhūtānām* — living beings; *ṛcchati* — a person attains; *śāntim* — peace [i.e., liberation].

Knowing Me as the beneficiary of all sacrifices (*yajña*) and austerities, as the Supreme Master of all worlds,⁴ and as the well-wisher of all living beings, a person attains peace. (5.29)



1. “City” refers to the body. “Nine gates” denotes the nine apertures of the body. These are for reproduction (genitals), evacuation (anus), seeing (eyes), hearing (ears), breathing (nostrils), ingestion, and speaking (mouth).

2. The sense here is that God does not impose the notion of doership on the living beings, nor is He responsible for their actions or results. Rather, the false sense of doership arises out of ignorance of the true self. In that conditioned state, one is impelled to act due to attachment to material pleasure or to redress pain. Moreover, the results of action accrue by the law of *karma*.

3. This means with eyes half-closed, focusing the sight a short distance ahead of oneself.

4. The word *loka* means an abode or sphere, such as the earth or the moon.

CHAPTER 6

THE PATH OF MEDITATION

DHYĀNA-YOGA

This chapter contains forty-seven verses. Five verses are spoken by Arjuna and forty-two by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The chapter begins with Kṛṣṇa affirming the superiority of *karma-yoga* (motiveless action) over *jñāna-yoga* (the abandonment of action). This is just to ensure that Arjuna is clear about his path. After this, Kṛṣṇa begins an elaboration on *dhyāna-yoga* (the path of meditation). This is a separate path, but if accommodated within the three *yogas* of *karma*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti*, it would be subsumed within *jñāna-yoga*.

In the first verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa equates a person who acts without any desire for the fruits of his actions to a *sannyāsī* and a *yogī*. He advises using one's mind for spiritual upliftment and not for degradation. The uncontrolled mind is like an enemy, while the controlled mind is like a friend (6). A *yogī* whose mind and senses are under control regards a piece of stone, clay, and gold equally (8). He does not discriminate between a relative, a friend, an enemy, an indifferent person, a mediator, a detestable person, and the virtuous (9).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the process of regulating the mind (10–18) and outlines the characteristics of an accomplished *yogī* (20–25). He emphasizes the need to abandon material desires and slowly bring one's mind under control (26–29). Thus, one attains peace and freedom from passion and lethargy. He declares that a person who sees Him everywhere is never invisible to Him (30). Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally becomes aware of

such a *yogī* (devotee). He concludes by stating that a supreme *yogī* who views the world with equanimity does not discriminate between favorable and unfavorable circumstances (31–32).

To this, Arjuna responds that such *yoga* is very difficult to attain, because the mind is exceedingly restless (33–34). Śrī Kṛṣṇa agrees and advises Arjuna to practice control of the mind and dispassion (35). He says that without control of the mind, one cannot achieve success in *yoga* and adds, “But it is attainable by one whose mind is under control and who strives through the proper means” (36).

Arjuna asks, “For one who has entered upon the path of *yoga* with faith, yet who does not strive sufficiently and whose mind strays from the path of *yoga*, perfection in *yoga* remains unattainable. What destination is attained by such a person” (37–39)? Kṛṣṇa responds that nothing adverse can occur to a *yogī*, even if he falls down from yogic practice. He will attain an auspicious birth that will enable him to revive the consciousness of *yoga* cultivated in the previous life. After many births, he will achieve perfection (40–45). Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares that a *yogī* is better than an ascetic, a *jñānī*, and a *karmī*, and He therefore advises Arjuna to become a *yogī* (46). Additionally, He further concludes that one who devotedly worships Him is the best of all *yogīs* (47).

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*anāśritaḥ karma-phalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ
sa sannyāsī ca yogī ca na niragnir na cākriyaḥ*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *yaḥ* — one who; *karoti* — performs; *kāryaṁ karma* — the work for which he is meant; *anāśritaḥ* — without expecting; *karma-phalam* — the fruits of action; *saḥ* — he; *sannyāsī ca* — [is both] a *sannyāsī*; *yogī ca* — and a [*karma*]-*yogī*; *na* — [but] not; *niragniḥ* — the person who renounces the sacred fire; *na ca* — nor; *akriyaḥ* — one who merely desists from action.

Śrī Bhagavān said: One who performs the work for which he is meant without expecting the fruits of action is both a *sannyāsī*¹ and a *yogī*, but not the person who renounces the sacred fire nor one who merely desists from action. (6.1)

*yam sannyāsam iti prāhur yogam taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava
na hy asannyasta-saṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana*

pāṇḍava — O son of Pāṇḍu; *yam* — what; *prāhuḥ* — is called; *sannyāsam iti* — “*sannyāsa*” [renunciation of the desire for the fruits of action]; *viddhi* — know; *taṁ* — that; *yogam* — as *yoga*; *hi* — indeed; *na kaścana* — no one; *bhavati* — becomes; *yogī* — a *yogī*; *asannyasta* — without abandoning; *saṅkalpaḥ* — volition for the fruits of action.

O Arjuna, what is called *sannyāsa* [renunciation of the desire for the fruits of action], know that to be *yoga*. Indeed, no one becomes a *yogī* without abandoning volition for the fruits of action. (6.2)

*ārurukṣor muner yogam karma kāraṇam ucyate
yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate*

muneh—for the sage; *ārurukṣoḥ*—who aspires to ascend; *yogam*—the path of *yoga*; *karma*—action [*karma-yoga*]; *ucyate*—is said; *kāraṇam*—to be the means; *tasya eva*—[and] for one in particular; *ārūḍhasya*—who has already ascended; *yoga*—[to the completion stage] of *yoga*; *śamaḥ*—fixity of the mind in meditation; *ucyate*—is said; *kāraṇam*—to be the means.

For the sage who aspires to ascend the path of *yoga*, action (*karma-yoga*) is said to be the means, and for one in particular who has already ascended to the completion stage of *yoga*, fixity of the mind in meditation (*śama*) is said to be the means. (6.3)

*yadā hi nendriyārtheṣu na karmasv anuṣajjate
sarva-saṅkalpa-sannyāsī yogārūḍhas tadocyate*

yadā hi—when indeed; *anuṣajjate*—a person is attached; *na indriya-artheṣu*—neither to the sense objects; *na karmasu*—nor to the actions [that lead to their enjoyment]; *sannyāsī*—being one who has given up; *sarva-saṅkalpa*—all volition [related to sensual enjoyment]; *tadā*—at that time; *ucyate*—he is said; *yoga-ārūḍhaḥ*—to have ascended to the completion stage of *yoga*.

When indeed a person is without attachment for the objects of the senses and for the actions that lead to their enjoyment, having given up all volition in this regard, then he is said to have ascended to the completion stage of *yoga*. (6.4)

*uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmānam avasādayet
ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ*

uddharet — one should uplift; *ātmānam* — the self; *ātmanā* — by the mind [i.e., through enlightened mind or discriminating wisdom]; *na avasādayet* — [and] never degrade; *ātmānam* — the self; *hi* — because; *ātmā eva* — the mind indeed; *bandhuḥ* — is the friend; *ātmanaḥ* — of the self; [and]; *ātmā eva* — the mind indeed; *ripuḥ* — is the enemy; *ātmanaḥ* — of the self.

The self is to be uplifted through the mind and never to be degraded, because the mind is indeed the friend of the self as well as its enemy.² (6.5)

*bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ
anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatru-vat*

ātmā — the mind; *bandhuḥ* — [is] a friend; *tasya ātmanaḥ eva* — specifically to that self; *yena ātmanā* — by whose self; *ātmā* — the mind; *jitaḥ* — is conquered; *tu* — but; *anātmanaḥ* — for a person whose mind is not under the control of the self; *ātmā eva* — the mind itself; *varteta* — behaves; *śatrutve* — in a harmful manner; *śatru-vat* — like an enemy.

The mind is a friend specifically to that self by whom the mind is conquered, but for a person whose mind is not under the control of the self, his mind itself behaves adversely, like an enemy. (6.6)

*jitātmanaḥ praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu tathā mānāpamānayoḥ*

ātmā — the mind; *jita-ātmanaḥ* — of [the yogī] who has conquered his mind; *praśāntasya* — [and] of he who is serene; *paramā samāhitaḥ* — remains intently fixed in meditation [on the Supreme Self]; *śīta* — [whether] in cold; *uṣṇa* — or heat;

sukha—in happiness; *duḥkheṣu*—or misery; *tathā*—and; *māna*—in honor; *apamānayoḥ*—or dishonor.

The mind of the yogī who has conquered his mind and who is perfectly serene, remains intently fixed in meditation on the Supreme Self, whether in heat or cold, in happiness or misery, or in honor or dishonor. (6.7)

*jñāna-vijñāna-tr̥ptātmā kūṭa-stho vijitendriyaḥ
yukta ity ucyate yogī sama-loṣṭrāśma-kāñcanaḥ*

tr̥pta-ātmā—[the person] whose heart is satisfied; *jñāna*—[through] knowledge; *vijñāna*—[and] immediate realization; *kūṭa-sthaḥ*—who is steady [under all circumstances]; *vijita-indriyaḥ*—whose senses are under control; *sama*—[and] who regards with equal vision; *loṣṭra*—a lump of earth; *aśma*—a stone; *kāñcanaḥ*—[and] a piece of gold; *yuktaḥ*—[such a person] who is united [with the Supreme] through *yoga* [*yoga-ārūḍhaḥ*]; *ucyate*—is called; *yogī iti*—“a yogī.”

The person whose heart is satisfied through knowledge and immediate realization, who is steady under all circumstances, whose senses are under control, and who regards with equal vision a lump of earth, a stone, and a piece of gold—such a person who is united [with the Supreme] through *yoga* (*yukta*)³ is called a yogī. (6.8)

*suhr̥n-mitrāry-udāsīna madhyastha-dveṣya-bandhuṣu
sādhuṣv api ca pāpeṣu sama-buddhir viśiṣyate*

sama-buddhiḥ—one whose vision is equal; *su-hṛt*—[toward] a well-wisher; *mitra*—a friend; *ari*—an enemy; *udāsīna*—an indifferent person; *madhya-stha*—a mediator; *dveṣya*—a detestable person; *bandhuṣu*—a relative; *sādhuṣu*—the

virtuous; *api ca* — and even; *pāpeṣu* — the sinners; *viśiṣyate* — is highly accomplished [in *yoga*].

One who looks equally on a well-wisher, a friend, an enemy, an indifferent person, a mediator, a detestable person, a relative, the virtuous, and even the sinners is highly accomplished in *yoga*. (6.9)

*yogī yuñjīta satatam ātmānam rahasi sthitaḥ
ekākī yata-cittātmā nirāśīr aparigrahaḥ*

yogī — the *yogī*; *satatam sthitaḥ* — while residing constantly; *ekākī* — alone; *rahasi* — in a secluded place; *yata-citta-ātmā* — having regulated the mind and body; *nirāśīḥ* — being free from desire; *aparigrahaḥ* — [and] devoid of possessiveness; *ātmānam yuñjīta* — should engage the mind in meditational absorption.

The *yogī*, while residing constantly alone in a secluded place, having regulated his mind and body, being free from desire and devoid of possessiveness, should engage his mind in meditational absorption. (6.10)

*śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthīram āsanam ātmanaḥ
nāty-ucchritam nāti-nīcam cailājina-kuśottaram
tatraikāgraṁ manaḥ kṛtvā yata-cittendriya-kriyaḥ
upaviśyāsane yuñjyād yogam ātma-viśuddhaye*

śucau deśe — in a clean and sanctified place; *pratiṣṭhāpya* — having established; *ātmanaḥ* — his own; *sthīram* — stable; *āsanam* — seat; *na ati ucchritam* — [which is] neither too high; *na ati nīcam* — nor too low; *kuśa* — [and which is made of] *kuśa* grass; *uttaram* — on top of which; *caila-ajina* — [there is] a soft cloth and a deerskin; *upaviśya* — while sitting; *tatra āsane* — on that seat; *yata* — having regulated; *citta-indriya-kriyaḥ* — the

functions of the mind and senses; *kṛtvā* — by making; *manaḥ* — the mind; *eka-agram* — concentrated on one point; *yuñjyāt* — he should practice; *yogam* — yoga; *viśuddhaye* — for purification; *ātma* — [of] the heart.

In a clean and sanctified place, the *yogī* should establish his own stable seat, which is neither too high nor too low, and which is made of *kuśa* grass covered with a deerskin and a soft cloth. While sitting on that seat, having regulated his mental and sensual functions by concentrating his mind on one point, he should practice *yoga* to purify his heart. (6.11–12)

*samaṁ kāya-śiro-grīvaṁ dhārayann acalaṁ sthiraḥ
samprekṣya nāsikāgraṁ svam diśaś cānavalokayan
praśāntātmā vigata-bhīr brahmacāri-vrate sthitaḥ
manaḥ samyamya mac-citto yukta āsīta mat-paraḥ*

dhārayan — holding; *kāya* — the body; *śiraḥ* — head; *grīvaṁ* — [and] neck; *samaṁ* — straight; *acalaṁ* — [and] steady; *sthiraḥ* — remaining firm; *samprekṣya* — gazing; *agram* — in front; *svam* — [of] one's own; *nāsikā* — nose; *anavalokayan* — without looking; *diśaḥ ca* — in any other direction; *praśānta* — being tranquil; *ātmā* — [in] mind; *vigata-bhīḥ* — being devoid of fear; *sthitaḥ* — being firmly established; *brahmacāri-vrate* — in the vow of celibacy; *samyamya* — having regulated; *manaḥ* — the mind; *mat-cittaḥ* — having fixed the mind on Me; *mat-paraḥ* — [and] being intent exclusively on Me; *āsīta* — [the *yogī*] should sit; *yuktaḥ* — remaining fully absorbed [in meditation on Me].

Holding the body, head, and neck straight and steady, remaining firm, fixing one's gaze in front of the nose without looking in any other direction, being tranquil in mind, devoid of fear, firmly established in the vow of celibacy, having

regulated the mind and fixed it on Me, and being intent exclusively on Me, the *yogī* should sit remaining fully absorbed in meditation on Me. (6.13–14)

*yuñjann evaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī niyata-mānasaḥ
śāntim nirvāṇa-paramāṁ mat-saṁsthāṁ adhigacchati*

yuñjan — fixing; *ātmānaṁ* — his mind; *sadā* — constantly; *evaṁ* — in this way [in meditation on Me]; *yogī* — the *yogī*; *niyata-mānasaḥ* — whose mind is regulated; *adhigacchati* — goes to [i.e., attains]; *śāntim* — peace; *nirvāṇa-paramāṁ* — [in the form of] supreme liberation; *mat-saṁsthāṁ* — [reaching to] My abode.

Fixing his mind constantly in this way in meditation on Me, the *yogī*, whose mind is regulated, attains peace in the form of supreme liberation (*brahma-nirvāṇa*) and reaches to My abode. (6.15)

*nāty-aśnatas 'tu yogo 'sti na caikāntam anaśnataḥ
na cāti-svapna-śīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna*

arjuna — O Arjuna; *na asti* — there is no question; *yogaḥ* — [of] yoga practice; *ati-aśnataḥ* — for one who overeats; *tu* — yet; *na ca* — neither; *anaśnataḥ* — for one who abstains from eating; *ekāntam* — to an extreme; *na ca* — nor; *ati-svapna-śīlasya* — for one who sleeps excessively; *na ca eva* — nor either; *jāgrataḥ* — for one who remains awake [to an extreme].

O Arjuna, there is no question of *yoga* for one who overeats or who abstains from eating to an extreme, nor for one who sleeps excessively or who remains awake to an extreme. (6.16)

*yuktāhāra-vihārasya yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu
yukta-svapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā*

yukta — [for one] who is moderate; *āhāra* — [in] diet; *vihārasya* — [and in] recreation; *yukta* — who is methodical; *ceṣṭasya* — [in] the performance; *karmasu* — of actions; *yukta* — [and] who is regulated; *svapna-avabodhasya* — [in] sleep and wakefulness; *yogaḥ* — the practice of *yoga*; *bhavati* — becomes; *duḥkha-hā* — the destroyer of misery.

For one who is moderate in diet and recreation, methodical in the performance of actions, and regulated in sleep and wakefulness, the practice of *yoga* dispels all misery. (6.17)

*yadā viniyatam cittam ātmany evāvaśiṣṭhate
nisprahaḥ sarva-kāmebhyo yukta ity ucyate tadā*

yadā — when; *viniyatam* — the disciplined; *cittam* — mind; *avaśiṣṭhate* — remains fixed; *ātmani eva* — in the self alone; *nisprahaḥ* — [and one is] free from desire; *sarva* — for all types; *kāmebhyo* — of sense enjoyments; *tadā* — then; *ucyate* — one is called; *yuktaḥ iti* — “*yukta*” [a person firmly established in *yoga*].

When the disciplined mind remains fixed in the self alone and one is free from hankering for all types of sense enjoyment, then one is called *yukta*, a person firmly established in *yoga*. (6.18)

*yathā dīpo nivāta-stho neṅgate sopamā smṛtā
yogino yata-cittasya yuñjato yogam ātmanaḥ*

yathā — just as; *dīpaḥ* — an oil lamp; *nivāta-sthaḥ* — situated in a windless place; *na iṅgate* — does not flicker; *sā* — such; *upamā* — [is] the analogy; *smṛtā* — cited; *yoginaḥ* — in regard to the

yogī; yata-cittasya — whose mind is controlled; *yuñjataḥ* — [and] who is unwaveringly engaged; *yogam* — in meditation; *ātmanah* — related to the self.

Just as an oil lamp situated in a windless place does not flicker, so too the *yogī* whose mind is controlled remains unwaveringly engaged in meditation on the self. Such is the analogy cited in this regard. (6.19)

*yatroparamate cittam niruddham yoga-sevayā
yatra caivātmanātmānam paśyann ātmani tuṣyati*

yatra — in that state of meditational absorption; *cittam* — the mind; *niruddham* — disciplined; *yoga-sevayā* — through the practice of meditation; *uparamate* — becomes utterly still; *yatra ca* — in that condition; *paśyan* — while directly witnessing; *ātmānam* — the self; *ātmanā* — through the purified mind; *tuṣyati* — one rejoices; *ātmani eva* — in the self alone.

In that state of meditational absorption, the mind, disciplined through the practice of meditation, becomes utterly still. In that condition, while directly witnessing the self through the purified mind, one rejoices in the self alone. (6.20)

*sukham ātyantikam yat tad buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam
vetti yatra na caivāyam sthitaś calati tattvataḥ*

yatra — in such a state; *ayam* — he [the *yogī*]; *vetti* — tastes or experiences; *tat* — that; *ātyantikam* — eternal; *sukham* — bliss; *yat* — which [is]; *atīndriyam* — beyond the external senses; *grāhyam* — [and] perceptible; *buddhi* — [only by] the intellect [that is imprinted with the *ātmā*'s form (*buddhyaivātmākāratayā*)];⁴ *sthitaḥ ca* — and being established

[in that condition]; *na eva calati*—he does not waiver at all; *tattvataḥ*—from the Absolute Truth.

In such a state, the *yogī* tastes the eternal bliss that is beyond the reach of the external senses and perceptible only through the intellect [that is imprinted with the *ātmā*'s form]. Being established in that condition, he does not waiver at all from the Absolute Truth. (6.21)

*yam labdhvā cāparam lābham manyate nādhikam tataḥ
yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate*

labdhvā—having attained; *yam*—that [state]; *na manyate*—one does not consider; *aparam*—any other; *lābham*—gain; *adhikam*—as superior; *tataḥ*—to that; *ca*—and; *sthitaḥ*—being established; *yasmin*—in which; *na vicālyate*—one is not perturbed; *guruṇā api*—even by tremendous; *duḥkhena*—hardship.

Having attained that state, one does not consider any other gain as superior to that, and being established in it, one is not perturbed even by tremendous hardship. (6.22)

*tam vidyād duḥkha-saṁyoga-viyogaṁ yoga-saṁjñitam
sa niścayena yuktavyo yogo 'nirviṇṇa-cetasā*

tam—that state; *viyogaṁ*—[which is the] absence; *duḥkha-saṁyoga*—[of] contact with pain; *vidyāt*—you should know; *yoga-saṁjñitam*—by the name *yoga*; *saḥ*—that; *yogaḥ*—*yoga*; *yuktavyaḥ*—should be practiced; *niścayena*—with resolute determination; *anirviṇṇa-cetasā*—[and] with freedom from mental despondency.

This state, which is devoid of any contact with pain, you should know as *yoga*. This *yoga* should be practiced with resolute determination and free from mental despondency. (6.23)

***saṅkalpa-prabhavān kāmāṁs tyaktvā sarvān aśeṣataḥ
manasaivendriya-grāmaṁ viniyamya samantataḥ***

tyaktvā — abandoning; *aśeṣataḥ* — completely; *sarvān* — all; *kāmān* — desires; *prabhavān* — born of; *saṅkalpa* — volition; *viniyamya* — one should fully restrain; *indriya-grāmaṁ* — all the senses; *samantataḥ* — from all sides; *manasā eva* — by the mind alone.

Abandoning completely all desires born of volition, one should fully restrain all the senses from all sides by the mind alone. (6.24)

***śanaiḥ śanair upamed buddhyā dhṛti-grhīṭayā
ātma-saṁstham manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcid api cintayet***

kṛtvā — making; *manaḥ* — the mind; *ātma-saṁstham* — established in the self; *buddhyā* — through the intellect; *dhṛti-grhīṭayā* — which has been brought under the control of firm resolution [i.e., *dhāraṇā*]; *upamet* — one should quiet [the mind]; *śanaiḥ śanaiḥ* — gradually; *na cintayet* — [and] should not think; *kiñcid api* — [of] anything else.

Fixing the mind on the self through the intellect, which has been made firmly resolute through meditative concentration [*dhāraṇā*], one should gradually quiet the mind without thinking of anything else. (6.25)

*yato yato niścarati manaś cañcalam asthiram
tatas tato niyamyaitad ātmany eva vaśam nayet*

yataḥ yataḥ — wherever; *cañcalam* — the flickering; *asthiram* — [and] unsteady; *manaḥ* — mind; *niścalati* — wanders; *niyamyā* — withdrawing; *etat* — it [the mind]; *tataḥ tataḥ* — from there; *nayet* — it should be brought back; *vaśam* — under the control; *ātmani eva* — of the self alone.

The flickering and unsteady mind should be withdrawn from wherever it wanders and brought back under the control of the self alone. (6.26)

*praśānta-manasaṁ hy enam yoginaṁ sukham uttamam
upaiti śānta-rajasaṁ brahma-bhūtam akalmaṣam*

uttamam — supreme; *sukham* — bliss; *upaiti* — approaches or attends; *enam* — this; *yoginaṁ hi* — *yogī* in particular; *manasaṁ* — whose mind; *praśānta* — is tranquil; *akalmaṣam* — who is sinless; *śānta-rajasaṁ* — whose passion is subdued; *brahma-bhūtam* — [and] who is situated in Brahman.

Supreme bliss attends that *yogī* in particular whose mind is tranquil, who is sinless, whose passion is subdued, and who is situated in Brahman. (6.27)

*yuñjann evaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī vigata-kalmaṣaḥ
sukhena brahma-saṁsparsaṁ atyantam sukham aśnute*

evaṁ — in this way; *vigata* — being completely freed; *kalmaṣaḥ* — [from] sin; *sadā* — [and] constantly; *yuñjan* — engaged in regulating; *ātmānaṁ* — his mind; *yogī* — the *yogī*; *sukhena* — easily; *aśnute* — enjoys; *atyantam* — eternal; *sukham* — bliss;

brahma-saṁsparśam — in the form of the immediate perception of the Absolute (Brahman).

In this way, being completely freed from sin and constantly engaged in regulating his mind, the *yogī* easily enjoys eternal bliss in the form of the immediate perception of the Absolute (Brahman). (6.28)

*sarva-bhūta-stham ātmānam sarva-bhūtāni cātmani
īkṣate yoga-yuktātmā sarvatra sama-darśanaḥ*

yoga-yukta-ātmā — [the *yogī*] whose mind is absorbed in the Absolute through *yoga*; *sama-darśanaḥ* — [and] who sees the Absolute; *sarvatra* — everywhere; *īkṣate* — directly perceives; *ātmānam* — the Self; *sarva-bhūta-stham* — as present in all beings; *ca* — and; *sarva* — all; *bhūtāni* — living beings; *ātmani* — [as existing] in the Self.

The *yogī*, whose mind is absorbed in the Absolute through *yoga* and who sees the Absolute everywhere, directly perceives the Self as present in all beings and all beings as existing in the Self. (6.29)

*yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati
tasyāham na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati*

tasya — for one; *yaḥ* — who; *paśyati* — sees; *mām* — Me; *sarvatra* — everywhere; *ca* — and; *paśyati* — who sees; *sarvaṁ* — all things; *mayi* — in Me; *aham* — I; *na praṇaśyāmi* — am never invisible [to him]; *ca* — and; *saḥ* — he; *na praṇaśyati* — is never unseen; *me* — to Me.

For one who sees Me present everywhere and who sees that all things exist in Me, I am never invisible to him, and he is

never unseen to Me. (6.30)

*sarva-bhūta-sthitam yo mām bhajaty ekatvam āsthitaḥ
sarvathā vartamāno 'pi sa yogī mayi vartate*

yogī—the *yogī*; *yaḥ*—who; *āsthitaḥ*—being established; *ekatvam*—in the vision of oneness [i.e., of nonduality]; *bhajati*—worships; *mām*—Me; *sarva-bhūta-sthitam*—as residing in all beings; *saḥ*—he; *vartate*—abides; *mayi*—in Me; *sarvathā*—in all; *vartamānaḥ api*—circumstances whatsoever.

The *yogī* who, being established in the vision of oneness, worships Me as residing in all beings, abides in Me under all circumstances whatsoever. (6.31)

*ātmaupamyena sarvatra samam paśyati yo 'rjuna
sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham sa yogī paramo mataḥ*

arjuna—O Arjuna; *mataḥ*—in My opinion; *yaḥ*—the person who; *aupamyena*—by comparison; *ātma*—to his own self; *paśyati*—sees; *sukham vā*—either the happiness; *yadi vā duḥkham*—or rather the distress; *sarvatra*—of all beings; *samam*—as identical [to his own]; *saḥ*—that; *yogī*—*yogī*; *paramaḥ*—is the topmost.

O Arjuna, in My opinion, the person who, by comparison to his own self, sees the happiness and distress of all living beings as identical to his own, that *yogī* is considered the topmost. (6.32)

*arjuna uvāca
yo 'yaṁ yogas tvayā proktaḥ sāmyena madhusūdana
etasyāham na paśyāmi cañcalatvāt sthitim sthirām*

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *madhu-sūdana*—O killer of the demon Madhu, Kṛṣṇa; *yaḥ ayam*—this; *yogaḥ*—yoga; *proktaḥ*—has been described; *tvayā*—by You; *sāmyena*—as a state of equanimity; [yet]; *aham*—I; *na paśyāmi*—do not perceive; *etasya*—it; *sthirām*—as a stable; *sthitim*—state; *cañcalatvāt*—owing to the flickering nature [of the mind].

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, this yoga has been described by You as a state of equanimity, yet I do not perceive it as a stable state, owing to the flickering nature [of the mind]. (6.33)

*cañcalam hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad drḍham
tasyāham nigrahaṁ manye vāyor iva su-duṣkaram*

kṛṣṇa—O Kṛṣṇa; *hi*—because; *manaḥ*—the mind; *cañcalam*—is naturally unsteady; *pramāthi*—turbulent; *bala-vat*—vehement; *drḍham*—[and] obstinate; *aham*—I; *manye*—consider; *nigraham*—the control; *tasya*—of it; *su-duṣkaram*—[to be] exceedingly difficult; *vāyoḥ iva*—just like the wind.

O Kṛṣṇa, because the mind is naturally unsteady, turbulent, vehement, and obstinate, I consider it exceedingly difficult to control, just like the wind. (6.34)

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
asaṁśayaṁ mahā-bāho mano durnigrahaṁ calam
abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *asaṁśayaṁ*—undoubtedly; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed; *manaḥ*—the mind; *durnigraham*—[is] difficult to curb; *calam*—[and] restless; *tu*—yet; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *gṛhyate*—it is subjugated; *abhyāsenā*—by practice; *ca*—and; *vairāgyeṇa*—by dispassion.

Śrī Bhagavān said: There is no doubt, O mighty-armed, that the mind is difficult to curb and restless. And yet, O son of Kuntī, it is subjugated by practice and dispassion. (6.35)

*asaṁyatātmanā yogo duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ
vaśyātmanā tu yatatā śakyo 'vāptum upāyataḥ*

yogaḥ — yoga; *duṣprāpaḥ* — [is] difficult to attain; *ātmanā* — for a person whose mind; *asaṁyata* — is uncontrolled; *iti* — such [is]; *me* — My; *matiḥ* — opinion; *tu* — but; *śakyaḥ* — it is possible; *avāptum* — to attain; *ātmanā* — by one whose mind; *vaśya* — is controlled; *yatatā* — [and] who strives; *upāyataḥ* — through proper means.

In My opinion, yoga is difficult to attain for a person of uncontrolled mind. But it is attainable by one whose mind is under control and who strives through the proper means. (6.36)

*arjuna uvāca
ayatiḥ śraddhayopeto yogāc calita-mānasaḥ
aprāpya yoga-saṁsiddhiṁ kām gatim kṛṣṇa gacchati*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna said; *kṛṣṇa* — O Kṛṣṇa; *upetaḥ* — [for] one who has entered upon [the path of yoga]; *śraddhayā* — with faith; *ayatiḥ* — [yet] who does not strive sufficiently; *mānasaḥ* — [and] whose mind; *calita* — strays; *yogāt* — from the path of yoga; *yoga-saṁsiddhim* — perfection in yoga; *aprāpya* — is unattainable; *kām* — which; *gatim* — destination; *gacchati* — does he attain.

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, for one who has entered upon the path of yoga with faith, yet who does not strive sufficiently and whose mind strays from the path of yoga, perfection in yoga

remains unattainable. What destination is attained by such a person? (6.37)

*kaccin nobhaya-vibhraṣṭaś chinnābhram iva naśyati
apratiṣṭho mahā-bāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi*

mahā-bāho — O Mighty-Armed Kṛṣṇa; *kaccit na* — is it not [the case that]; *vibhraṣṭaḥ* — the person who has fallen; *ubhaya* — [from] both [*yoga* and *karma*]; *apratiṣṭhaḥ* — who is without any support; *vimūḍhaḥ* — [and] who is deluded; *pathi* — on the path; *brahmaṇaḥ* — of Brahman; *naśyati* — perishes; *abhram iva* — like a cloud; *chinna* — [that is] scattered.

O Mighty-Armed, is it not the case that a person who has fallen from both *yoga* and *karma*, who is without any support and deluded on the path of Brahman, perishes like a scattered cloud? (6.38)

*etan me saṁśayaṁ kṛṣṇa chettum arhasy aśeṣataḥ
tvad-anyaḥ saṁśayasyāsyā chettā na hy upapadyate*

arhasi — it behooves You; *kṛṣṇa* — O Kṛṣṇa; *chettum* — to dispel; *etat* — this; *saṁśayam* — doubt; *me* — of mine; *aśeṣataḥ* — completely; *hi* — because; *anyaḥ* — other; *tvat* — than You; *na upapadyate* — there does not exist; *chettā* — a remover; *asya* — of this; *saṁśayasya* — doubt.

It behooves You, O Kṛṣṇa, to dispel this doubt of mine completely, for there is no one else but You who can dispel it. (6.39)

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśas tasya vidyate*

na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścīd durgatim tāta gacchati

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *pārtha* — O son of Pṛthā; *na eva iha* — neither in this life; *na amutra* — nor in the next life; *vidyate* — is there; *vināśaḥ* — any loss; *tasya* — for such a person; *hi* — because; *tāta* — My dear; *kaścit* — anyone; *kalyāṇa-kṛt* — who strives for the ultimate good; *na gacchati* — never meets; *durgatim* — [with] calamity.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Pārtha, there is no loss to such a person, either in this life or the next, because, My dear, anyone who strives for the ultimate good never meets with calamity. (6.40)

*prāpya puṇya-kṛtām lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ
śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yoga-bhraṣṭo 'bhijāyate*

prāpya — having attained; *lokān* — the planets; *puṇya-kṛtām* — [achieved] by those who performed meritorious deeds; *uṣitvā* — [and] having resided [there]; *śāśvatīḥ* — [for] many; *samāḥ* — years; *yoga-bhraṣṭaḥ* — the person who has strayed from the path of *yoga*; *abhijāyate* — takes birth; *gehe* — in the home; *śucīnām* — of the virtuous; *śrī-matām* — [and] of the prosperous.

Having attained the planets achieved by those of meritorious deeds and having resided there for many years, the person who has strayed from the path of *yoga* takes birth in the home of those who are virtuous and prosperous. (6.41)

*atha vā yoginām eva kule bhavati dhīmatām
etaḍ dhi durlabhataram loke janma yad īdṛśam*

atha vā — alternatively [if the yogī fails in his attempt after long practice of *yoga*]; *bhavati* — he is born; *kule* — in the family or

lineage; *yoginām eva* — specifically of those firmly established in *yoga*; *dhīmatām* — [and] endowed with wisdom; *janma* — the birth; *yat* — which [is]; *īdṛśam* — such as this; *durlabhataram* — [is] very rare; *hi* — indeed; *etat loke* — in this world.

Alternatively, [if the *yogī* fails in his attempt after long practice of *yoga*] he is born in the home specifically of those firmly established in *yoga* and endowed with wisdom. Such a birth is very rare indeed in this world. (6.42)

*tatra tam buddhi-saṁyogam labhate paurva-dehikam
yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ saṁsiddhau kuru-nandana*

kuru-nandana — O son of Kuru; *tatra* — in either of those two births; *labhate* — he regains; *tam* — that; *buddhi-saṁyogam* — connection with the wisdom of transcendence; *paurva-dehikam* — of the previous birth; *ca* — and; *tataḥ* — thereafter; *yatate* — he strives; *bhūyaḥ* — again [or with increased vigor]; *saṁsiddhau* — for perfection [i.e., for liberation].

O descendant of Kuru, in either of those two births, he regains the connection with the wisdom of transcendence acquired in the previous birth and thereafter strives with renewed vigor to attain perfection. (6.43)

*pūrvābhyāsenā tenaiva hriyate hy avaśo 'pi saḥ
jijñāsur api yogasya śabda-brahmātivartate*

hi — indeed; *saḥ* — he; *hriyate* — is again drawn [to *yoga*]; *avaśaḥ* *api* — even unintentionally; *tena eva* — specifically by virtue of that; *abhyāsenā* — practice; *pūrvā* — previously undertaken; *jijñāsuḥ api* — even a practitioner who is merely inquisitive [i.e., who is not yet accomplished in *yoga*]; *yogasya* — about *yoga*;

ativartate — transcends; *śabda-brahma* — the path of ritualistic action described in the Vedas.

Indeed, he is again drawn [to yoga], even unintentionally, by virtue of the practice undertaken in his previous life. Even a practitioner who is merely inquisitive about yoga transcends the path of ritualistic action described in the Vedas. (6.44)

*prayatnād yatamānas tu yogī saṁśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ
aneka-janma-saṁsiddhas tato yāti parām gatim*

tu — but; *yogī* — the *yogī*; *yatamānaḥ* — who strives; *prayatnāt* — diligently; *saṁśuddha* — being purified; *kilbiṣaḥ* — of sins; *saṁsiddhaḥ* — becomes perfect; *aneka* — [after] many; *janma* — births; *tataḥ* — [and] thereafter; *yāti* — he attains; *parām* — the supreme; *gatim* — goal.

But the *yogī*, who practices diligently, being purified of all sins, becomes perfect after many births⁵ and thereafter attains the supreme goal. (6.45)

*tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna*

yogī — the *yogī*; *adhikaḥ* — [is] superior; *tapasvibhyaḥ* — to the ascetics; *adhikaḥ* — superior; *jñānibhyaḥ api* — even to the *jñānīs*; *ca* — and; *yogī* — the *yogī*; *adhikaḥ* — [is] superior; *karmibhyaḥ* — to those engaged in *karma*; *mataḥ* — this indeed is My opinion; *tasmāt* — therefore; *arjuna* — Arjuna; *bhava* — be; *yogī* — a *yogī*.

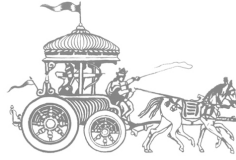
The *yogī* [who meditates on the Supreme Self] is superior to the ascetics, superior even to the *jñānīs* [those who realize the scriptural teachings on the Absolute as unqualified

Brahman], and superior to those who engage in *karma* [with a material motive]. This indeed is My opinion. Therefore, Arjuna, be a *yogī*. (6.46)

***yoginām api sarveṣām mad-gatenāntar-ātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ***

sarveṣām — among all; *yoginām api* — *yogīs* whatsoever; *yaḥ* — one who; *śraddhāvān* — [is] endowed with faith; *bhajate* — [and] who worships; *mām* — Me; *antaḥ-ātmanā* — with the mind; *mat-gatena* — fully absorbed in Me; *saḥ* — he; *mataḥ* — is considered; *me* — by Me; *yukta-tamaḥ* — [as] the greatest of those united through *yoga*.

Even among all *yogīs* whatsoever, the one who is endowed with faith and who worships Me with his mind fully absorbed in Me, I consider to be the greatest of those who are united through *yoga*. (6.47)



1. A *sannyāsī* is a renunciate who gives up all material pursuits, relations, and possessions, and leads a life devoted to the Absolute.

2. The word *ātman* has various meanings in Sanskrit, including body, mind, intellect, life-air, individual self, Brahman, and the essence and object of love.

3. The word *yukta* can mean united, possessed of, endowed with, moderate, balanced, and so on. It comes from the root √*yuj* which means “to unite,” which is also the root for the word *yoga*.

4. Both Śrīdhara Svāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura have commented on the word *buddhi* using this adverbial clause. We have included it here in the *anvaya* because it is crucial to specify exactly what type of intellect is able to perceive the eternal bliss being spoken of in the verse. That bliss, being transcendental, is not perceptible through the ordinary workings of the intellect, but only through the intellect “that is imprinted with the *ātmā*’s form.” As a further confirmation of the point, Śrīla Viśvanātha adds that such bliss is perceptible specifically in the transcognitive state of *samādhi*.

5. “Many births” here does not necessarily imply an innumerable number but at the very least more than one.

CHAPTER 7

THE PATH OF IMMEDIATE REALIZATION

VIJÑĀNA-YOGA

When a devotee thinks of God, he becomes absorbed in Him. Correspondingly, God also becomes absorbed in His devotee. In this state of awareness, full of grace and affection for Arjuna, Śrī Kṛṣṇa begins this chapter without any prompting from Arjuna, focusing mainly on the topic of devotion.

This chapter, which begins the second set of six chapters and concentrates on *bhakti-yoga*, consists of thirty verses, all spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa explains *jñāna* (knowledge) and *vijñāna* (its immediate realization) (2). It is very rare that someone takes to the path of liberation (3). The majority of humanity is engrossed in survival and material pleasure. Yet, even among thousands of liberated individuals, hardly anyone knows Śrī Kṛṣṇa in reality. In nine verses, Kṛṣṇa explains how He is the source of everything and the possessor of the material energy. This energy manifests as the five gross elements, as well as the mind, intellect, and ego. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's other energy is the conscious living being for whom this whole universe is evolved (4–6).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the essence of everything. He is the taste in water, the fragrance in earth, and the effulgence in the sun and moon (8–9). Indeed, everything emanates from Him and is pervaded by Him. Why then are people not aware of Him? Śrī Kṛṣṇa responds that it is due to the influence of His *māyā* (the material energy), which consists of the three *guṇas* (13). Only those who surrender to Him can transcend His *māyā* (14).

Those bereft of wisdom do not surrender to Him (15). By contrast, the wise who, after many births, surrender unto Him, are dear to Him and exceedingly rare (19).

Those whose discernment is stolen away by desire, worship other *devas* and achieve insignificant goals (20–23). Those free from the illusion of duality and whose misdeeds have come to an end, worship Kṛṣṇa with staunch faith (28). Being established in immediate realization of Him, such *yogīs* remain conscious of Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa affirms this conclusion at the end of the chapter, while referring to the complete array of His potencies: “Those who strive for deliverance from old age and death, having taken shelter of Me, realize the Absolute (Brahman), the total complex of integral selfhood (*adhyātma*), and consequential action (*karma*) in its entirety. Those who have realized Me, along with the truths regarding phenomenality (*adhibhūta*), cosmic governance (*adhidaiva*), and the immanent impeller of action (*adhiyajña*), and whose minds are firmly established in Me are conscious of Me even at the time of death” (29–30). The technical Sanskrit terms used here are defined in the beginning of Chapter 8.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*mayy āsakta-manāḥ pārtha yogam yuñjan mat-āśrayaḥ
asaṁśayaṁ samagram māṁ yathā jñāsyasi tac chrṇu*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *pārtha*—O son of Prthā; *śṛṇu*—please listen; *tat*—to that [description]; *yathā*—[of] how; *āsakta-manāḥ*—with your mind attached; *mayi*—to Me; *mat-āśrayaḥ*—taking refuge in Me; *yuñjan*—[and] practicing; *yogam*—yoga; *jñāsyasi*—you will come to know; *mām*—Me; *samagram*—fully; *asaṁśayaṁ*—free from doubt.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, please listen how, with your mind attached to Me, taking refuge in Me, and practicing yoga, you will come to know Me fully, free from any doubt. (7.1)

*jñānam te 'haṁ sa-vijñānam idam vakṣyāmy aśeṣataḥ
yaj jñātvā neha bhūyo 'nyaj jñātavyam avaśiṣyate*

aham—I; *vakṣyāmi*—shall reveal; *te*—to you; *aśeṣataḥ*—in entirety; *idam*—this; *jñānam*—knowledge; *sa*—along with; *vijñānam*—the process of its immediate realization; *jñātvā*—knowing; *yat*—which; *na anyat*—nothing else; *bhūyaḥ*—further; *avaśiṣyate*—remains; *jñātavyam*—to be known; *iha*—in this world.

I shall reveal to you in full this knowledge along with the process of its immediate realization, knowing which nothing else further remains to be known in this world. (7.2)

*manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu kaścid yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānāṁ kaścin māṁ vetti tattvataḥ*

sahasreṣu—among thousands; *manuṣyāṇām*—of human beings; *kaścit*—someone; *yatati*—strives; *siddhaye*—for perfection; *yatatām*—[moreover] among those who are striving; *siddhānām api*—[and] even among those who have already attained perfection; *kaścit*—someone [i.e., hardly anyone]; *vetti*—knows; *mām*—Me; *tattvataḥ*—in reality.

Among thousands of human beings, one might strive for perfection. Moreover, among all those who are striving and even among those who have already attained perfection, hardly anyone knows Me in reality. (7.3)

*bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ kham mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

bhūmiḥ—earth; *āpaḥ*—water; *analaḥ*—fire; *vāyuḥ*—air; *kham*—ether; *manaḥ*—mind; *buddhiḥ*—intellect; *eva ca*—and indeed; *ahaṅkāraḥ*—ego; *iti*—such; *iyam*—this [is]; *me*—My; *prakṛtiḥ*—material energy; *bhinnā*—divided; *aṣṭadhā*—eightfold.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, and ego—this is My material energy (*prakṛti*), divided into eight categories. (7.4)

*apareyam itas tv anyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho yayedam dhāryate jagat*

iyam—this; *aparā*—[is My] inferior [nature]; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed one; *tu*—but; *viddhi*—you should know [that]; *anyāṁ*—distinct; *itaḥ*—from this; *me*—[is] My; *parām*—superior; *prakṛtim*—nature; *jīva-bhūtāṁ*—[which consists of] the individual self; *yayā*—by whom; *idam*—this; *jagat*—cosmos; *dhāryate*—is sustained.

This is My inferior nature, O mighty-armed. But you should know that distinct from this, is My superior nature which consists of the individual self (jīva) by whom the cosmos is sustained. (7.5)

*etat-yonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇīty upadhāraya
aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā*

upadhāraya — know; *iti* — thus [that]; *etat* — these [two natures]; *yonīni* — are the source; *sarvāṇi* — [of] all; *bhūtāni* — created beings; *aham* — I [am]; *prabhavaḥ* — the origin; *tathā* — and; *pralayaḥ* — the dissolution; *kṛtsnasya* — of the entire; *jagataḥ* — cosmos.

Know that these two natures are the source of all created beings. I am the origin and dissolution of the entire cosmos. (7.6)

*mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhananjaya
mayi sarvam idam protam sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva*

asti — there is; *kiñcit na* — nothing; *anyat* — else; *parataram* — superior; *mattaḥ* — to Me; *dhanam-jaya* — O conqueror of wealth; *idam* — this; *sarvam* — entire [cosmos]; *protam* — is strung; *mayi* — on Me; *maṇi-gaṇāḥ iva* — like pearls; *sūtre* — on a thread.

There is nothing superior to Me, O Arjuna. This entire cosmos is strung on Me, like pearls on a thread. (7.7)

*raso 'ham apsu kaunteya prabhāsmi śaśi-sūryayoḥ
praṇavaḥ sarva-vedeṣu śabdaḥ khe pauruṣam nṛṣu*

kaunteya — O son of Kuntī; *apsu* — in water; *aham* — I [am]; *rasaḥ* — taste; *śāśi-sūryayoḥ* — [and] in the moon and sun; *asmi* — I am; *prabhā* — light; *sarva* — in all; *vedeṣu* — the Vedas; *praṇavaḥ* — [I am] the sacred syllable Om; *khe* — in ether; *śabdaḥ* — [I am] sound; *nṛṣu* — [and] in human beings; *pauruṣam* — [I am] prowess.

O son of Kuntī, in water I am taste, and in the moon and sun I am light. In all the Vedas I am the sacred syllable Om, in ether I am sound, and in human beings I am prowess. (7.8)

*punyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca tejaś cāsmi vibhāvasau
jīvanam sarva-bhūteṣu tapaś cāsmi tapasviṣu*

pṛthivyām ca — in the earth; *asmi* — I am; *punyaḥ* — pure; *gandhaḥ* — odor; *ca* — and; *vibhāvasau* — in fire; *tejaḥ* — [I am] radiance; *sarva* — in all; *bhūteṣu* — living beings; *asmi* — I am; *jīvanam* — life [itself]; *ca* — and; *tapasviṣu* — in ascetics; *tapah* — [I am] austerity.

In the earth I am pure odor, and in fire I am radiance. In all living beings I am life itself, and in ascetics I am austerity. (7.9)

*bījam mām sarva-bhūtānām viddhi pārtha sanātanam
buddhir buddhimatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham*

pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *viddhi* — know; *mām* — Me; *sanātanam* — [as] the eternal; *bījam* — seed; *sarva-bhūtānām* — of all living beings; *asmi* — I am; *buddhiḥ* — the wisdom; *buddhimatām* — of the wise; [and]; *aham* — I [am]; *tejaḥ* — the prowess; *tejasvinām* — of the powerful.

O Pārtha, know Me to be the eternal seed of all living beings. I am the wisdom of the wise and the prowess of the powerful. (7.10)

*balam balavatām cāham kāma-rāga-vivarjitam
dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo 'smi bharatarṣabha*

bharata-ṛṣabha — O lord of the Bharatas; *aham* — I [am]; *balam* — the strength; *balavatām* — of the strong; *vivarjitam* — devoid of; *kāma* — hankering; *rāga* — [and] attachment; *ca* — and; *bhūteṣu* — in human beings; *asmi* — I am; *kāmaḥ* — desire or passion; *dharmāviruddhaḥ* — [that is] unopposed to scriptural injunctions.

O best of the Bharatas, I am the strength of the strong, free from hankering and attachment, and in human beings, I am passion that is unopposed to scriptural injunctions. (7.11)

*ye caiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasās tāmasās ca ye
matta eveti tāt viddhi na tv aham teṣu te mayi*

ye eva — all those; *bhāvāḥ* — mental states [such as tranquility and self-control, elation and pride, and dejection and illusion]; *sāttvikāḥ* — [that are] of the nature of illumination; *ca* — and; *rājasāḥ* — [those that are] of the nature of dynamism; *ye ca* — as well as those; *tāmasāḥ* — [that are] of the nature of inertia; *viddhi* — know; *iti* — this [that]; *tāt* — [all of] them; *mattaḥ eva* — [originate] exclusively from Me; *aham* — I; *na* — am not; *teṣu* — under them [the *guṇas* and the mental states induced by them]; *tu* — yet; *te* — they; *mayi* — are under Me.

Know that all mental states, be they of the nature of illumination (*sāttvikā*), dynamism (*rājasika*), or inertia (*tāmasika*), originate exclusively from Me. I am not under the

guṇas and the mental states induced by them, yet they are under Me. (7.12)

***tribhir guṇa-mayair bhāvair ebhiḥ sarvam idaṁ jagat
mohitaṁ nābhijānāti mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam***

mohitam — deluded; *ebhiḥ* — by these; *bhāvair* — mental states; *tribhiḥ guṇa-mayair* — which are products of the three *guṇas* [of *prakṛti*]; *idaṁ* — this; *sarvam* — entire; *jagat* — universe; *na abhijānāti* — does not know; *mām* — Me; *param* — [who am] beyond; *ebhyaḥ* — them [the mental states induced by the *guṇas*]; *avyayam* — [and] immutable.

Deluded by these mental states, which are products of the three *guṇas* of nature, this entire universe does not know Me, who am beyond these mental states and immutable. (7.13)

***daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te***

eṣā — this; *daivī* — divine; *māyā* — external potency; *mama* — of Mine; *guṇa-mayī* — constituted of the three *guṇas* of material nature; *duratyayā hi* — is indeed very difficult to surmount; [yet]; *ye* — those who; *prapadyante* — take refuge; *mām eva* — in Me alone; *te* — they; *taranti* — cross over; *etāṁ* — this; *māyā* — *māyā*.

This divine external potency of Mine, constituted of the three *guṇas*, is indeed very difficult to surmount. Yet, those who take refuge in Me alone cross over this *māyā*. (7.14)

***na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛta-jñānā āsurāṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ***

mūḍhāḥ — the fools [i.e., those utterly bereft of discrimination]; *nara-adhamāḥ* — those who are the lowest of men; *jñānāḥ* — those whose wisdom; *apahr̥ta* — has been carried away; *māyayā* — by *māyā*; *āśritāḥ* — [and] those who have embraced; *āsuram bhāvam* — the secularist-materialistic nature; *duṣkṛtinaḥ* — all such performers of unmeritorious acts; *na prapadyante* — do not take refuge; *mām* — in Me.

Those who are utterly bereft of discrimination, those who are the lowest of men, those whose wisdom has been carried away by *māyā*, and those who have embraced the secularist-materialistic (*asuric*)¹ nature—all such performers of unmeritorious acts do not take refuge in Me. (7.15)

*catur-vidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino 'rjuna
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha*

catuḥ-vidhāḥ — four kinds; *su-kṛtinaḥ* — [of] virtuous [i.e., those engaged in meritorious acts]; *janāḥ* — people; *bhajante* — worship; *mām* — Me; *arjuna* — O Arjuna; *ārtaḥ* — the distressed; *jijñāsuḥ* — those enquiring into the nature of truth; *artha-arthī* — the seeker of wealth; *ca* — and; *jñānī* — the wise; *bharatarṣabha* — O best of Bharatas.

Four kinds of virtuous people worship Me, O Arjuna—the distressed, those inquiring into the nature of truth, the seeker of wealth, and the wise (*jñānī*), O best of Bharatas. (7.16)

*teṣāṁ jñānī nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir viśiṣyate
priyo hi jñānino 'tyartham ahaṁ sa ca mama priyaḥ*

teṣāṁ — out of these; *jñānī* — the person endowed with wisdom; *nitya-yuktaḥ* — who is ever united [with Me]; *eka-*

bhaktiḥ —[and] invested with exclusive devotion; *viśiṣyate* — is preeminent; *hi* — indeed; *aham* — I [am]; *atyartham* — exceedingly; *priyaḥ* — dear; *jñāninaḥ* — to the wise person; *ca* — and; *saḥ* — he; *priyaḥ* — [is] dear; *mama* — to Me.

Out of these, the person endowed with wisdom, who is ever united with Me and invested with exclusive devotion, is preeminent. Indeed, I am exceedingly dear to the wise person and he is dear to Me. (7.17)

*udārāḥ sarva evaite jñānī tv ātmaiva me matam
āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā mām evānuttamām gatim*

sarve — all; *ete eva* — these people indeed; *udārāḥ* — are noble; *tu* — but; *jñānī* — the person endowed with wisdom; *ātmā eva* — [is] My very Self; *me* — [this is] My; *matam* — opinion; *hi* — because; *saḥ* — such a person; *yukta-ātmā* — having fixed his mind [on Me]; *āsthitaḥ* — has taken refuge [of Me, considering]; *mām eva* — Me alone; *anuttamām* — [as] the highest; *gatim* — goal.

All of these people indeed are noble, but the person endowed with wisdom is My very Self. This is My view, because such a person, having fixed his mind on Me, has taken refuge of Me, considering Me alone as the highest goal. (7.18)

*bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*

ante — after; *bahūnām* — many; *janmanām* — births; *jñānavān* — the person endowed with the wisdom; *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti* — that “Vāsudeva is everything;” *prapadyate* — surrenders; *mām* — unto Me; *saḥ* — such; *mahā-ātmā* — a great person; *sudurlabhaḥ* — is extremely rare.

After many births, the person endowed with the wisdom that “Vāsudeva² is everything” surrenders unto Me. Such a great person is extremely rare. (7.19)

*kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ
tam tam niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā*

jñānāḥ—those whose discernment; *hṛta*—has been taken away; *taiḥ taiḥ*—by various; *kāmaiḥ*—desires; *prapadyante*—surrender; *anya*—to other; *devatāḥ*—deities; *āsthāya*—observing; *tam tam*—the various; *niyamam*—rules [related to them]; *niyatāḥ*—they are swayed; *svayā*—by their own; *prakṛtyā*—nature.

Those whose discernment has been taken away by various desires surrender to other deities. Observing the various rules related to them, they are swayed by their own nature. (7.20)

*yo yo yām yām tanum bhaktaḥ śraddhayārcitum icchati
tasya tasyācalām śraddhām tām eva vidadhāmy aham*

yām yām—whatever; *tanum*—form; *yaḥ yaḥ*—a particular; *bhaktaḥ*—devotee; *icchati*—desires; *arcitum*—to worship; *śraddhayā*—with faith; *aham*—I; *vidadhāmi*—bestow; *tasya tasya*—upon him specifically; *acalām*—firm; *śraddhām*—faith; *tām eva*—in that [deity] alone.

Whatever form a particular devotee chooses to worship with faith, I bestow upon him firm faith in that particular deity. (7.21)

*sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas tasyārāadhanam īhate
labhate ca tataḥ kāmān mayaiva vihitān hi tāt*

yuktaḥ—being endowed; *tayā*—with that; *śraddhayā*—faith; *saḥ*—he [the devotee]; *īhate*—performs; *ārāadhanam*—worship; *tasya*—of that [particular deity]; *ca*—and; *labhate*—obtains; *tataḥ*—from that [deity]; *tāt*—those; *kāmān*—desired boons; *vihitān hi*—[which] are in fact granted; *mayā eva*—by Me alone.

Endowed with that faith, the devotee worships that particular deity and obtains through that deity the desired boons which are in fact granted by Me alone. (7.22)

*antavat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām
devān deva-yajo yānti mad-bhaktā yānti mām api*

tu—however; *tat*—that; *phalam*—fruit; *teṣāṁ*—of those [people]; *alpa-medhasām*—of meager intellect; *bhavati*—is; *antavat*—perishable; *deva-yajaḥ*—the worshipers of the *devas*; *yānti*—go; *devān*—to the *devas*; [whereas]; *mat*—My; *bhaktāḥ*—devotees; *yānti*—go; *mām api*—to Me indeed.

However, the fruit attained by these people of meager intellect is perishable. The worshipers of the *devas* go to the *devas*, whereas My devotees come to Me. (7.23)

*avyaktam vyaktim āpannam manyante mām abuddhayaḥ
param bhāvam ajānanto māmāvyayam anuttamam*

ajānantaḥ—not knowing; *mama*—My; *param*—supreme; *bhāvam*—nature; *avyayam*—[which is] immutable; *anuttamam*—[and] insurmountable; *abuddhayaḥ*—those of unawakened discrimination; *manyante*—consider; *mām*—Me;

āpannam — as having become; *vyaktim* — a visible manifestation; *avyaktam* — [of] the unmanifest [Brahman].

Not knowing My supreme nature, which is immutable and insurmountable, those of unawakened discrimination consider Me as but a visible manifestation of the unmanifest formless Brahman. (7.24)

*nāham prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ
mūḍho 'yaṁ nābhijānāti loko mām ajam avyayam*

samāvṛtaḥ — being veiled; *yoga-māyā* — by [My] divine potency; *aham* — I; *na prakāśaḥ* — am not manifest; *sarvasya* — to everyone; [therefore]; *ayam* — this; *mūḍhaḥ* — deluded; *lokaḥ* — world; *na abhijānāti* — does not know; *mām* — Me; *ajam* — the unborn; *avyayam* — [and] imperishable.

Veiled by My divine potency (*yoga-māyā*), I am not manifest to all. Therefore, the deluded world does not know Me, the unborn and imperishable. (7.25)

*vedāham samatītāni vartamānāni cārjuna
bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni mām tu veda na kaścana*

arjuna — O Arjuna; *aham* — I; *veda* — know; *bhūtāni* — all living beings; *samatītāni* — past; *vartamānāni ca* — present; *bhaviṣyāṇi ca* — and future; *tu* — but; *na kaścana* — no one; *veda* — knows; *mām* — Me.

O Arjuna, I know all living beings, past, present, and future, but nobody knows Me. (7.26)

*icchā-dveṣa-samutthena dvandva-mohena bhārata
sarva-bhūtāni sammohaṁ sarge yānti parantapa*

bhārata—O Bhārata; *param-tapa*—O scorcher of enemies; *sarva*—all; *bhūtāni*—living beings; *yānti*—go to [i.e., are beset with]; *sammoham*—delusion; *sarge*—at birth; *mohena*—due to the illusion; *dvandva*—of duality; *samutthena*—which is born of; *icchā*—desire; *dveṣa*—[and] aversion.

O Bhārata, O scorcher of enemies, all living beings are beset with delusion from their very birth due to the illusion of duality which is born of desire and aversion. (7.27)

*yeṣāṁ tv anta-gataṁ pāpaṁ janānāṁ puṇya-karmaṇām
te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ*

tu—but; *yeṣāṁ*—those; *janānāṁ*—people; *puṇya-karmaṇām*—whose actions are virtuous; *pāpaṁ*—[and] whose misdeeds [or offences]; *anta-gataṁ*—have come to an end; *te*—they; *nirmuktāḥ*—being free; *moha*—[from] the delusion; *dvandva*—[of] duality; *bhajante*—worship; *mām*—Me; *dṛḍha-vratāḥ*—with firm resolve.

But those people whose actions are virtuous and whose misdeeds have come to an end, they, being freed from the delusion of duality, worship Me with firm resolve. (7.28)

*jarā-maraṇa-mokṣāya mām āśritya yatanti ye
te brahma tad viduḥ kṛtsnam adhyātmam karma cākhilam*

ye—those who; *yatanti*—strive; *mokṣāya*—for deliverance; *jarā*—[from] old age; *maraṇa*—[and] death; *āśritya*—having taken shelter; *mām*—of Me; *te*—they; *viduḥ*—realize; *tat*—that; *brahma*—Absolute; *kṛtsnam*—the total complex; *adhyātmam*—[of] integral selfhood; *ca*—and; *karma*—consequential action; *akhilam*—in its entirety.

Those who strive for deliverance from old age and death, having taken shelter of Me, realize the Absolute (Brahman), the total complex of integral selfhood (*adhyātma*), and consequential action (*karma*) in its entirety. (7.29)

*sādhībhūtādhidaivam mām sādhiyajñam ca ye viduḥ
prayāṇa-kāle 'pi ca mām te vidur yukta-cetasah*

ye ca — and those who; *viduḥ* — know or realize; *mām* — Me; *sa-adhibhūta* — along with [the truths regarding] phenomenality; *adhidaivam* — cosmic governance; *ca* — and; *sa-adhiyajñam* — the immanent impeller of action; *te* — they; *yukta-cetasah* — whose minds are established in Me; *viduḥ* — are conscious; *mām* — of Me; *api* — even; *kāle* — at the time; *prayāṇa* — [of] death.

Those who have realized Me, along with the truths regarding phenomenality (*adhibhūta*), cosmic governance (*adhidaiva*), and the immanent impeller of action (*adhiyajña*), and whose minds are firmly established in Me are conscious of Me even at the time of death. (7.30)



1. The term *asuric* here signifies the materialistic nature of those whose sole aim in life is to enjoy materially without any concern for other fellow beings, nature, or *karma*.

2. Vāsudeva is another name for Kṛṣṇa and means “the son of Vasudeva.”

CHAPTER 8

THE PATH OF DELIVERANCE THROUGH SONIC BRAHMAN

TĀRAKA-BRAHMA-YOGA

At the end of Chapter 7, Śrī Kṛṣṇa introduced the terms *brahman* (the Absolute), *adhyātma* (integral selfhood), *karma* (consequential action), *adhibhūta* (phenomenality), *adhidaiva* (cosmic governance), and *adhiyajña* (the immanent impeller of action). Arjuna, not being very clear about the meaning of these terms, inquires about them at the beginning of Chapter 8. In addition, he then asks, “How are You to be known at the time of death by the self-controlled?” Kṛṣṇa first defines all these terms and then answers Arjuna’s question in detail.

There are twenty-eight verses in this chapter. The first two verses are questions posed by Arjuna, while the remaining verses contain Kṛṣṇa’s reply. Kṛṣṇa defines the six terms (3–4): “The highest imperishable reality is Brahman, the self’s (*sva*) state of individuated existence (*bhāva*) is what is meant by integral selfhood (*adhyātma*), and the acts of resignation (*visarga*) [such as the offering of sacrifices to the *devas*] that perpetuate the birth and evolution of living beings are called consequential action (*karma*). O best of embodied beings, perishable existence [i.e., the existence of objects that are subject to passing away] is what is meant by phenomenality (*adhibhūta*), the cosmic being (*puruṣa*) is known as the supreme deity of cosmic governance (*adhidaivata*), and I Myself am present in this body as the impeller and bestower of the results of all action in the form of the Immanent Self (*adhiyajña*).”

Kṛṣṇa then answers Arjuna's question, explaining how one's future birth depends upon one's consciousness at the time of death. He describes the yogic method of leaving the body, which is to die thinking of Kṛṣṇa while chanting Om. This results in the *yogī* attaining His abode (5–14). Such a person does not take birth again (15–16). Kṛṣṇa describes the cycle of creation and destruction (17–19) and states that His own abode is eternal (20–21). This abode is attained only through devotion (22).

There are two paths that a *yogī* can follow upon departing from the body: the path of light and the path of darkness (24–25). One who departs by the path of light does not take birth again, while one who leaves by the path of darkness has to come back after enjoying heavenly pleasures (26). A *yogī* who knows these two paths is never bewildered and reaches the supreme destination (27–28).

arjuna uvāca

*kiṁ tad brahma kiṁ adhyātmam kiṁ karma puruṣottama
adhibhūtaṁ ca kiṁ proktam adhidaivam kiṁ ucyate
adhiyajñaḥ katham ko 'tra dehe 'smin madhusūdana
prayāṇa-kāle ca katham jñeyo 'si niyatātmabhiḥ*

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna inquired; *kiṁ*—what [is]; *tad*—that; *brahma*—Absolute; *kiṁ*—what [is]; *adhyātmam*—integral selfhood; *kiṁ*—what [is]; *karma*—consequential action; *puruṣa-uttama*—O best of men; *kiṁ*—what; *proktam*—is called; *adhibhūtaṁ*—phenomenality; *ca*—and; *kiṁ*—what; *ucyate*—is called; *adhidaivam*—cosmic governance; *madhusūdana*—O Madhusūdana; *kaḥ*—who [is]; *adhiyajñaḥ*—the immanent impeller of action; *katham*—[and] how [is He situated]; *atra*—here; *asmin*—in this; *dehe*—body; *ca*—and; *katham*—how; *jñeyasmi*—are You to be known; *prayāṇa-kāle*—at the time of death; *niyata-ātmabhiḥ*—by those of restrained mind.

Arjuna inquired: What is the Absolute (Brahman), what is integral selfhood (*adhyātma*), and what is consequential action (*karma*), O best of men? What does phenomenality (*adhibhūta*) refer to, and what is meant by cosmic governance (*adhidaiva*)? Madhusūdana, who is the immanent impeller of action (*adhiyajña*) and how does he dwell in this body? And how are You to be known at the time of death by those of restrained mind? (8.1–2)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*akṣaram brahma paramam svabhāvo 'dhyātmam ucyate
bhūta-bhāvodbhava-karo visargaḥ karma-saṁjñitaḥ*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān replied; *paramam*—the highest; *akṣaram*—imperishable reality; *brahma*—[is] Brahman; *svabhāvaḥ*—the self's (*sva*) state of individuated existence (*bhāva*); *ucyate*—is called; *adhyātmam*—integral selfhood; *visargaḥ*—[and] the act of resignation [such as the offering of sacrifice to the *devas* (*yajña*)]; *bhūta-bhāva-udbhava-karaḥ*—that perpetuates the birth and evolution of living beings; *sañjñitaḥ*—is called; *karma*—consequential action.

Śrī Bhagavān replied: The highest imperishable reality is Brahman, the self's (*sva*) state of individuated existence (*bhāva*) is what is meant by integral selfhood (*adhyātma*), and the acts of resignation (*visarga*) [such as the offering of sacrifices to the *devas*] that perpetuate the birth and evolution of living beings are called consequential action (*karma*). (8.3)

*adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaś cādhidaivatam
adhiyajño 'ham evātra dehe deha-bhṛtām vara*

vara—O best; *deha-bhṛtām*—of the embodied beings; *kṣaraḥ*—perishable; *bhāvaḥ*—existence; *adhibhūtam*—[is] phenomenality; *puruṣaḥ*—the cosmic being; *adhidaivatam*—[is] the supreme deity of cosmic governance [He who presides over the *devatās*]; *ca*—and; *aham eva*—I Myself [am]; *adhiyajñaḥ*—the impeller and bestower of the results of all action as the Immanent Self; *atra*—[present] in this; *dehe*—body.

O best of embodied beings, perishable existence [i.e., the existence of objects that are subject to passing away] is what is meant by phenomenality (*adhibhūta*), the cosmic being (*puruṣa*) is known as the supreme deity of cosmic governance (*adhidaivata*), and I Myself am the impeller and bestower of

the results of all action in the form of the Immanent Self (*adhiyajña*) present in this body. (8.4)

*anta-kāle ca mām eva smaran muktvā kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ*

ca — and; *yaḥ* — one who; *anta-kāle* — at the time of death; *prayāti* — departs [from this world]; *muktvā* — while giving up; *kalevaram* — the body; *smaran* — being absorbed in remembrance; *mām eva* — [of] Me alone; *saḥ* — he; *yāti* — attains; *mat-bhāvaṁ* — My nature; *na asti* — there is no; *saṁśayaḥ* — doubt; *atra* — about this.

And one who, at the time of death, departs from the body while absorbed in remembrance of Me alone, attains My nature. There is no doubt about this. (8.5)

*yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ*

kaunteya — O son of Kuntī; *yaṁ yaṁ vā api* — whatsoever; *bhāvaṁ* — object; *smaran* — one contemplates; *ante* — at the time of death; *tyajati* — [while] he gives up; *kalevaram* — the body; *taṁ tam eva* — that only; *eti* — he attains; *bhāvitaḥ* — being absorbed; *sadā* — constantly; *bhāva* — [in] thought; *tat* — [of] that.

O son of Kuntī, whatever object one contemplates at the time of death while giving up the body, that and that only he attains, being constantly absorbed in thoughts of it. (8.6)

*tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmara yudhya ca
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir mām evaiṣyasy asaṁśayaḥ*

tasmāt — therefore; *anusmara* — remember; *mām* — Me; *sarveṣu* — at every; *kāleṣu* — moment; *ca* — and; *yudhya* — fight; *manaḥ* — [with your] mind; *buddhiḥ* — [and] intellect; *arpita* — dedicated; *mayi* — unto Me; *eṣyasi* — you will attain; *mām eva* — Me alone; *asaṁśayaḥ* — undoubtedly.

Therefore, remember Me at every moment and be engaged in battle. With your mind and intellect dedicated unto Me, you will undoubtedly attain Me alone. (8.7)

*abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena cetasā nānya-gāminā
paramam puruṣam divyam yāti pārthānucintayan*

pārtha — O son of Pr̥thā; *anucintayan* — being constantly immersed in contemplation; *divyam* — [on] the Divine; *paramam puruṣam* — Supreme Person; *yuktena* — by absorption; *abhyāsa-yoga* — in the practice of meditation; *na anya-gāminā* — with an unwavering [lit., “not straying anywhere else”]; *cetasā* — mind; *yāti* — one attains [Him alone].

O Arjuna, being constantly immersed in contemplation on the Divine Supreme Person by absorption in the practice of meditation with an unwavering mind, one attains Him alone. (8.8)

*kaviṁ purāṇam anuśāsītāram
aṇor aṇīyāṁsam anusmared yaḥ
sarvasya dhātāram acintya-rūpam
āditya-varṇam tamasaḥ parastāt
prayāṇa-kāle manasācalena
bhaktyā yukto yoga-balena caiva
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak
sa tam param puruṣam upaiti divyam*

prayāṇa-kāle—at the time of death; *yaḥ*—one who; *yuktaḥ*—being endowed; *bhaktyā*—with devotion; *ca*—and; *samyak āveśya*—having carefully fixed; *prāṇam*—the vital force; *madhye*—between; *bhruvoḥ*—the two eyebrows [at the third-eye center (*ājñā-cakra*) where it intersects the *suṣumnā* vital flow channel in the interior of the spinal cord]; *yoga-balena eva*—specifically through the power of *yoga*; *anusmaret*—meditates constantly; *acalena manasā*—with an undeviating mind; [on the *Puruṣa*]; *kaviṁ*—[who is] omniscient; *purāṇam*—beginningless; *anuśāsītāram*—the primordial preceptor; *aṇīyāṁsam*—subtler; *aṇoḥ*—than the atom; *dhātāram*—the sustainer; *sarvasya*—of everything; *rūpam*—whose form; *acintya*—is inconceivable; *āditya-varṇam*—[who is] resplendent like the sun; *parastāt*—[and] beyond; *tamaśaḥ*—ignorance [or darkness]; *saḥ*—such a person; *upaiti*—attains; *tam*—that; *divyam*—Divine; *param puruṣam*—Supreme Person.

At the time of death, one who, being endowed with devotion, and having carefully fixed the vital force (*prāṇa*) at the *ājñā-cakra* through the power of *yoga*, meditates constantly with an undeviating mind on the *Puruṣa*, who is omniscient, beginningless, the primordial preceptor, subtler than the atom,¹ the universal sustainer, whose form transcends the limits of rationality, who is resplendent like the sun and beyond ignorance—such a person attains that Divine Supreme Person. (8.9–10)

*yad akṣaram veda-vido vadanti
viśanti yad yatayo vīta-rāgāḥ
yad icchanto brahmacaryam caranti
tat te padam saṅgrahaṇa pravakṣye*

pravakṣye—I shall explain; *te*—to you; *saṅgrahaṇa*—briefly; *tat*—[about] that; *padam*—supreme destination; *yat*—which; *veda-vidaḥ*—the knowers of the Vedas; *vadanti*—call; *akṣaram*—the imperishable Brahman; *yat*—into which; *yatayaḥ*—spiritual aspirants; *vīta-rāgāḥ*—bereft of desires; *viśanti*—enter; *icchantaḥ*—[and] desiring; *yat*—which; *caranti*—[students] lead; *brahmacaryam*—an abstinent life.

I shall tell you in brief about the supreme destination, which the knowers of the Vedas refer to as the imperishable Brahman, into which spiritual aspirants bereft of all desires enter, and desiring which, students lead an abstinent life. (8.11)

*sarva-dvārāṇi saṁyamya mano hṛdi nirudhya ca
mūrdhny ādhāyātmanaḥ prāṇam āsthito yoga-dhāraṇām
om ity ekākṣaram brahma vyāharan mām anusmaran
yaḥ prayāti tyajan deham sa yāti paramām gatim*

saṁyamya—controlling; *sarva-dvārāṇi*—all the gates of the senses; *ca*—and; *nirudhya*—restraining; *manaḥ*—the mind [from all external phenomena by holding it steadily]; *hṛdi*—in the heart; *ādhāya*—leading; *prāṇam*—the vital force; *mūrdhni*—to the crown of the head; *āsthitaḥ*—being situated; *yoga-dhāraṇām*—in yogic fixity; *ātmanaḥ*—related to the Self [the state of union with God]; *vyāharan*—repeating; *eka-akṣaram*—the one imperishable syllable; *om iti*—“Om;” *brahma*—[which is] Brahman [in the form of sound]; *anusmaran*—[and] continuously remembering; *mām*—Me; *yaḥ*—one who; *prayāti*—departs [thus]; *tyajan*—while quitting; *deham*—the body; *saḥ*—he; *yāti*—reaches; *paramām*—the supreme; *gatim*—destination.

Controlling all the gates of the senses, restraining the mind from all external phenomena by holding it steadily in the heart, leading the vital force to the crown of the head, being situated in yogic fixity rooted in the Self, repeating the one imperishable syllable, “Om,” which is Brahman in the form of sound, and continuously remembering Me — one who departs thus while giving up the body reaches the supreme destination. (8.12–13)

*ananya-cetāḥ satataṁ yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ
tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ*

pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *yaḥ* — one who; *satataṁ* — constantly; *smarati* — remembers; *mām* — Me; *nityaśaḥ* — in a regulated manner; *ananya-cetāḥ* — his mind being exclusively fixed [on Me]; *tasya* — to such; *yoginaḥ* — a *yogī*; *nitya-yuktasya* — who is ever united [with Me]; *aham* — I; *sulabhaḥ* — [am] easily available.

Arjuna, one who constantly remembers Me in a regulated manner, his mind being fixed exclusively on Me—to such a *yogī*, who is ever united with Me, I am easily attainable. (8.14)

*mām upetya punar janma duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ*

mahā-ātmānaḥ — the highly self-realized; *upetya* — having attained; *mām* — Me; *na āpnuvanti* — do not attain; *punaḥ* — ever again; *aśāśvatam* — a transient; *janma* — birth; *duḥkhālayam* — [which is] the abode of misery; [because]; *gatāḥ* — [they] have reached; *paramām* — the highest; *saṁsiddhiṁ* — perfection.

The highly self-realized who have attained Me are no longer subject to a transient birth which is the abode of misery, because they have reached the highest perfection. (8.15)

*ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate*

arjuna — O Arjuna; *lokāḥ* — all planets; *ā-brahma-bhuvanāt* — up to Brahmāloka; *āvartinaḥ* — are places from which the residents must return [to earth]; *punaḥ* — again; *tu* — but; *upetya* — upon attaining; *mām* — Me; *kaunteya* — O son of Kuntī; *na vidyate* — there is no; *janma* — rebirth; *punaḥ* — again.

O Arjuna, all planets, up to and including that of Brahmā,² are places from which the residents must endure return [to earth] again, but upon attaining Me, O son of Kuntī, there is no rebirth again. (8.16)

*sahasra-yuga-paryantam ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ
rātrim yuga-sahasrāntām te 'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ*

te — those; *janāḥ* — people; *viduḥ* — who know; *yat* — that; *ahaḥ* — a day; *brahmaṇaḥ* — of Brahmā; *paryantam* — extends up to; *sahasra yuga*³ — one thousand cycles of four *yugas*; *rātrim* — [and that his] night; *antām* — ends; *yuga sahasra* — [after] one thousand cycles of four *yugas*; *viduḥ* — are the true knowers; *ahaḥ-rātra* — [of] day and night.

Those who know that a day of Brahmā lasts for a thousand cycles of four *yugas* and that his night also extends for the same span, are the true knowers of day and night. (8.17)

*avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavanty ahar-āgame
rātry-āgame pralīyante tatraivāvyakta-sañjñake*

ahaḥ-āgame — at the beginning of the day [of Brahmā]; *sarvāḥ* — all; *vyaktayaḥ* — manifested beings; *prabhavanti* — emanate; *avyaktāt* — from the unmanifest; *rātri-āgame* — [and] at the approach of his night; *pralīyante* — they merge [again]; *tatra eva* — into that alone; *sañjñake* — which is known as; *avyakta* — the unmanifest.

At the advent of Brahmā's day, all manifested beings emanate from the unmanifest, and at the approach of his night, they again merge into that alone which is known as the unmanifest. (8.18)

*bhūta-grāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate
rātry-āgame 'vaśaḥ pārtha prabhavaty ahar-āgame*

pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *ayam saḥ eva* — that very; *bhūta-grāmaḥ* — multitude of beings; *bhūtvā bhūtvā* — having taken birth again and again; *pralīyate* — is merged [back into the unmanifest]; *āgame* — on the approach; *rātri* — [of Brahmā's] night; *prabhavati* — [and] is born again; *avaśaḥ* — helplessly [i.e., under the influence of past *karma*]; *āgame* — on the approach; *ahaḥ* — [of Brahmā's] day.

O Pārtha, that very multitude of beings, having taken birth again and again, is merged back into its unmanifest causal source at the approach of [Brahmā's] night and is born again under the influence of past *karma* at the approach of [his] day. (8.19)

*paras tasmāt tu bhāvo 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati*

tu—but; *paraḥ*—beyond; *tasmāt*—that; *avyaktāt*—unmanifest; *anyaḥ*—[there is yet] another; *bhāvaḥ*—existent [the Supreme Person]; *yaḥ*—who; *avyaktaḥ*—[is] unmanifest; *sanātanaḥ*—[and] without beginning or end; *saḥ*—He; *na vinaśyati*—does not perish; *naśyatsu*—[even] upon the destruction; *sarveṣu bhūteṣu*—of all beings.

But beyond that unmanifest, there is yet another existent [the Supreme Person] who is unmanifest and without beginning or end. He does not perish, even upon the destruction of all beings. (8.20)

*avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas tam āhuḥ paramām gatim
yam prāpya na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama*

avyaktaḥ—that unmanifest; *uktaḥ*—is called; *akṣaraḥ iti*—“the imperishable;” *tam*—[and] that; *āhuḥ*—is said to be; *paramām*—the ultimate; *gatim*—goal; *prāpya*—attaining; *yam*—which; *na nivartante*—they do not return [to this mortal world]; *tat*—that [the unmanifest]; *mama*—[is] My; *paramam*—supreme; *dhāma*—form, nature, or identity.

That unmanifest is called “the imperishable” (*akṣara*) and is said to be the ultimate goal, attaining which, one does not return to this mortal world. That [unmanifest] is My supreme form and identity (*dhāma*). (8.21)

*puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā
yasyāntaḥ-sthāni bhūtāni yena sarvam idaṁ tatam*

pārtha—O son of Pṛthā; *saḥ*—that; *paraḥ*—Supreme; *puruṣaḥ*—Person; *yasya antaḥ-sthāni*—within whom are situated; *bhūtāni*—all living beings; *yena*—[and] by whom; *idaṁ*—this; *sarvam*—entire [cosmos]; *tatam*—is pervaded; *labhyaḥ*—is

attainable; *tu*—however; *ananyayā*—[only] by exclusive; *bhaktyā*—devotion.

O Pārtha, that Supreme Person within whom all living beings are situated and by whom this entire cosmos is pervaded, is attainable, however, only through exclusive devotion. (8.22)

*yatra kāle tv anāvṛttim āvṛttim caiva yoginaḥ
prayātā yānti tam kālam vakṣyāmi bharatarṣabha*

bharata-ṛṣabha—O best of the Bharatas; *vakṣyāmi*—I shall describe [to you]; *tam*—that; *kālam*—moment; *yatra kāle*—in which moment; *yoginaḥ*—the *yogīs*; *tu*—indeed; *prayātāḥ*—having departed [from their bodies]; *yānti*—attain; *āvṛttim*—return; *anāvṛttim ca eva*—[or] no return.

O best of the Bharatas, I shall describe to you the different moments in which the *yogīs*, on departing from their bodies, either return or do not return [to the material world]. (8.23)

*agnir jyotir ahaḥ śuklaḥ ṣaṭ-māsā uttarāyaṇam
tatra prayātā gacchanti brahma brahma-vido janāḥ*

janāḥ—individuals; *brahma-vidaḥ*—who have realized Brahman; *gacchanti*—attain; *brahma*—Brahman; *prayātāḥ*—while departing [from this world]; *tatra*—during [i.e., under the influence of]; *agniḥ*—the fire [and by implication the deity presiding over fire]; *jyotiḥ*—the light [and its presiding deity]; *ahaḥ*—the day [and its presiding deity]; *śuklaḥ*—the bright fortnight [and its presiding deity]; *ṣaṭ-māsāḥ*—[and] the six months; *uttara-ayanam*—when the sun is in the northern hemisphere [and its presiding deity].

Those who have realized Brahman attain Brahman, while departing from this world during the fire, the light, the day, the bright fortnight, and the six months of the sun's northern course [i.e., by following the path presided over by the deities of these respective temporal influences]. (8.24)

*dhūmo rātris tathā kṛṣṇaḥ ṣaṇ-māsā dakṣiṇāyanam
tatra cāndramasam jyotir yogī prāpya nivartate*

yogī—the *yogī*; [who departs]; *tatra*—during [i.e., under the influence of]; *dhūmaḥ*—the smoke [and its presiding deity]; *rātriḥ*—the night [and its presiding deity]; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—the dark fortnight [and its presiding deity]; *tathā*—and; *ṣaṭ-māsāḥ*—the six months; *dakṣiṇa-ayanam*—when the sun is in the southern hemisphere [and its presiding deity]; *prāpya*—having attained; *jyotiḥ*—the celestial light; *cāndramasam*—[of] the lunar sphere; *nivartate*—returns [to this earthly planet].

The *yogī* who departs during the smoke, the night, the dark fortnight, and the six months of the sun's southern course [i.e., by following the path presided over by these deities], attains the celestial light of the lunar sphere and subsequently returns [to this earthly planet]. (8.25)

*śukla-kṛṣṇe gatī hy ete jagataḥ śāśvate mate
ekayā yāty anāvṛttim anyayāvartate punaḥ*

ete—these two; *gatī hi*—paths indeed; *jagataḥ*—of the world; *śukla*—the bright; *kṛṣṇe*—[and] the dark; *mate*—are considered; *śāśvate*—as ever existent; *ekayā*—[proceeding] by one; *yāti*—a person attains; *anāvṛttim*—no return; *anyayā*—[while proceeding] by the other; *āvartate*—one comes back; *punaḥ*—again.

These two paths of the world, the bright and the dark, are considered to be ever existent. Proceeding by one of them, one does not return, while proceeding by the other, one comes back again. (8.26)

*naite sṛtī pārtha jānan yogī muhyati kaścana
tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu yoga-yukto bhavārjuna*

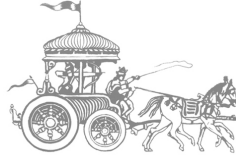
pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *jānan* — knowing; *ete* — these two; *sṛtī* — paths; *yogī* — a *yogī*; *na muhyati* — is never deluded; *kaścana* — at any time; *tasmāt* — therefore; *sarveṣu kāleṣu* — at all times; *bhava* — be; *yoga-yuktaḥ* — endowed with *yoga*; *arjuna* — O Arjuna.

O Pārtha, knowing these two paths, a *yogī* is never deluded. Therefore, at all times be endowed with *yoga*, O Arjuna. (8.27)

*vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva dāneṣu yat puṇya-phalaṁ
pradiṣṭam
atyeti tat sarvam idaṁ viditvā yogī param sthānam upaiti
cādyam*

yat — whatever; *puṇya-phalam* — meritorious results; *pradiṣṭam* — have been indicated [in scriptures]; *vedeṣu* — regarding the study of the Vedas; *yajñeṣu* — the performance of *yajña* (sacrifice); *tapaḥsu* — the execution of penance; *ca* — and; *eva* — indeed; *dāneṣu* — acts of charity; *yogī* — the *yogī*; *atyeti* — surpasses; *tat sarvam* — all of that; *viditvā* — knowing; *idaṁ* — this truth [regarding the eight topics that Arjuna inquired into]; *upaiti ca* — he thus attains; *ādyam* — the original; *param* — supreme; *sthānam* — abode.

Whatever meritorious results have been indicated [in scriptures] regarding the study of the Vedas, the performance of *yajña*, the execution of penance, and acts of charity, the *yogī* surpasses all of that, knowing this truth [regarding the eight topics of inquiry]. He thus attains the original supreme abode. (8.28)



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- [1.](#) In Indian philosophy, the word *anu*, translated here as “atom,” refers specifically to the smallest indivisible and, hence, partless unit of matter.
 - [2.](#) Brahmā is the four-headed creator-god situated in Satyaloka, the highest plane in the material universe. He should not be confused with Brahman, the Absolute Reality.
 - [3.](#) The word *yuga* here refers to the cycle of four *yugas*, namely, Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali combined together.

CHAPTER 9

THE PATH OF THE MOST CONFIDENTIAL WISDOM

RĀJA-GUHYA-YOGA

In Chapter 7, Śrī Kṛṣṇa disclosed to Arjuna transcendental knowledge and the means of its immediate realization. There was a break in this discussion owing to Arjuna's request for clarification of the special terms employed by Kṛṣṇa at the end of Chapter 7. The answers to these questions formed Chapter 8. Now, in Chapter 9, Kṛṣṇa again returns to the topic of knowledge (*jñāna*) and its realization (*vijñāna*).

This chapter consists of thirty-four verses, all spoken by Kṛṣṇa. Bhagavān declares that the knowledge regarding the Supreme Self and transcendence, which He is about to reveal to Arjuna, is most confidential and pure. Those who are closed to its consideration remain in the cycle of birth and death. After thus specifying the importance of *jñāna* and *vijñāna*, by assimilation of which one becomes liberated (1–3), Kṛṣṇa begins to reveal the truth of His own being. He pervades everything, all beings reside in Him, and yet He is not situated in them, being beyond everything. He is the cause of creation and destruction, and yet He is not bound by these acts (4–9).

Material nature, *prakṛti*, functions under His supervision (10). People who are ignorant of His true nature when He appears in a human form remain under the influence of material nature (11–12). On the other hand, those of divine nature engage in devotion to God (13–14). In the next four verses (16–19), Kṛṣṇa describes His majesty. He explains that those who worship Him through Vedic *yajñas*, reach heaven after death but have to

return to earth after their piety is exhausted (20–21). In contrast to this, Kṛṣṇa affirms that He personally takes care of His devotees (22).

Even those who worship other *devas*, worship Him alone, because these *devas* are His manifestations for the management of the universe. But such worshipers do not attain God (25). Kṛṣṇa speaks about the process and greatness of *bhakti-yoga* (26–33). In the last verse, He requests Arjuna to become His devotee (34). This is His supreme instruction.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

idaṁ tu te guhyatamaṁ pravakṣyāmy anasūyave

jñānaṁ vijñāna-sahitaṁ yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *pravakṣyāmi* — I shall disclose; *te* — to you; *anasūyave* — who are devoid of envy; *idaṁ* — this; *guhya-tamaṁ* — most secret; *jñānaṁ* — knowledge; *vijñāna sahitaṁ tu* — along with the means of its immediate realization; *jñātvā* — knowing; *yaj* — which; *mokṣyase* — you will be freed; *śubhāt* — from inauspiciousness [i.e., from the bondage of material existence].

Śrī Bhagavān said: I shall disclose to you, who are devoid of envy, this most secret knowledge [of devotion] along with the means of its immediate realization, knowing which you will be freed from the inauspiciousness of material existence. (9.1)

rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam pavitram idaṁ uttamam

pratyakṣāvagamaṁ dharmyam su-sukhaṁ kartum avyayam

idaṁ — this [knowledge of devotion]; *rāja-vidyā* — [is] the king of wisdom; *rāja-guhyam* — the king of secrets; *uttamam* — supremely; *pavitram* — purifying; *avagamam* — cognized; *pratyakṣa* — through immediate intuition; *dharmyam* — intrinsically of the nature of *dharma*; *su-sukhaṁ* — very easy; *kartum* — to practice; *avyayam* — [and] imperishable.

This knowledge [of devotion] is the paramount wisdom, the king of secrets, supremely purifying, cognized through immediate intuition, intrinsically of the nature of *dharma*, easily undertaken, and imperishable. (9.2)

*aśraddadhānāḥ puruṣa dharmasyāśya parantapa
aprāpya mām nivartante mṛtyu-saṁsāra-vartmani*

puruṣāḥ—people; *aśraddadhānāḥ*—who lack faith; *asya*—regarding this; *dharmasya*—[supreme] wisdom path; *param-tapa*—O scorcher of enemies; *aprāpya*—not attaining; *mām*—Me; *nivartante*—they return; *vartmani*—to the path; *saṁsāra*—[of] cyclic existence; *mṛtyu*—[rooted in] death.

People lacking faith in this supreme wisdom path, O scorcher of enemies, being unable to attain Me, return to the path of cyclic existence rooted in death. (9.3)

*mayā tatam idam sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ*

idam—this; *sarvaṁ*—entire; *jagat*—cosmos; *tatam*—is pervaded; *mayā*—by Me; *avyakta-mūrtinā*—through My unmanifest form; *sarva-bhūtāni*—all living beings; *mat-sthāni*—[are] situated in Me; *ca*—and yet; *ahaṁ*—I; *na avasthitaḥ*—am not present; *teṣu*—in them.

This entire cosmos is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form. All beings are in Me, but I am not present in them. (9.4)

*na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaram
bhūta-bhṛn na ca bhūta-stho mamātmā bhūta-bhāvanaḥ*

ca—and yet; *bhūtāni*—all beings; *na*—are not; *mat-sthāni*—in Me; *paśya*—behold; *me*—My; *yogam aiśvaram*—yogic opulence; *mama*—[although] My; *ātmā*—intrinsic nature; *bhūta-bhāvanaḥ*—[is as] the origin of all beings; *ca*—and; *bhūta-bhṛt*—[as] the sustainer of all living beings; *na bhūta-sthaḥ*—I am not situated in the living beings.

And yet all beings are not in Me. Behold My yogic opulence. Though My intrinsic nature is such that I am the origin and sustainer of all beings, I am not in them. (9.5)

*yathākāśa-sthito nityam vāyuḥ sarvatra-go mahān
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni mat-sthānīty upadhāraya*

yathā — just as; *mahān* — the vast; *vāyuḥ* — wind; *sarvatra-gaḥ* — blowing everywhere; *ākāśa-sthitaḥ* — abides in space; *nityam* — always; *tathā* — similarly; *upadhāraya* — know; *iti* — thus; *sarvāṇi bhūtāni* — [that] all living beings; *mat-sthāni* — abide in Me.

Just as the vast wind, blowing everywhere abides always in space, similarly know that all beings abide in Me. (9.6)

*sarva-bhūtāni kaunteya prakṛtiṁ yānti māmikām
kalpa-kṣaye punas tāni kalpādaḥ visṛjāmy aham*

kaunteya — O son of Kuntī; *kalpa-kṣaye* — at the time of dissolution; *sarva-bhūtāni* — all living beings; *yānti* — enter; *māmikām* — My; *prakṛtiṁ* — material nature; *kalpa-ādaḥ* — [and] at the beginning of a new creative cycle; *aham* — I; *visṛjāmi* — send forth; *tāni* — them; *punaḥ* — again.

O son of Kuntī, at the time of dissolution, all beings are merged in My *prakṛti* (material nature), and at the beginning of a new creative cycle, I send them forth again. (9.7)

*prakṛtiṁ svām avaśṭabhya visṛjāmi punaḥ punaḥ
bhūta-grāmam imāṁ kṛtsnam avaśam prakṛter vaśāt*

avaśṭabhya — acting through the agency; *svām* — [of] My; *prakṛtiṁ* — material nature; *visṛjāmi* — I send forth; *punaḥ*

punaḥ—again and again; *vaśāt*—in accordance with [lit., under the influence of]; *prakṛteḥ*—[their] previously acquired nature; *imam*—this; *kṛtsnam*—entire; *bhūta-grāmam*—multitude of beings; *avaśam*—who are helplessly subjected [to their past store of *karma*].

Acting through the agency of My material nature, I repeatedly send forth, in accordance with their own previously acquired natures, this entire multitude of beings, who are helplessly subjected to their past store of *karma*. (9.8)

*na ca mām tāni karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya
udāsīna-vad āsīnam asaktam teṣu karmasu*

dhanam-jaya—O conqueror of riches, Arjuna; *tāni*—those; *karmāṇi*—actions [of creation, sustenance, and dissolution]; *na nibadhnanti*—do not bind; *mām*—Me; *asaktam*—[who am] unattached; *teṣu*—to those; *karmasu*—actions; *ca*—and; *āsīnam*—situated; *udāsīna-vat*—like someone who is indifferent, uninvolved, and impartial.

O Arjuna, those actions [of creation, sustenance, and dissolution] do not bind Me, who am unattached to them and situated as an uninvolved, impartial witness. (9.9)

*mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram
hetunānena kaunteya jagad viparivartate*

mayā—by My; *adhyakṣeṇa*—supervision; *prakṛtiḥ*—material nature; *sūyate*—brings forth; *sa-cara-acaram*—[the cosmos] consisting of moving and non-moving beings; *anena hetunā*—owing to this [i.e., God's supervision]; *kaunteya*—O son of

Kuntī; *jagat*—the cosmos; *viparivartate*—revolves [i.e., is repeatedly unfolded and enfolded].

It is due to My supervision that material nature is enabled to bring forth the cosmos consisting of moving and non-moving beings. Owing to this, O son of Kuntī, the cosmos is unfolded and enfolded again and again. (9.10)

*avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam
param bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūta-maheśvaram*

ajānantaḥ—being unacquainted; *mama*—[with] My; *param*—supreme; *bhāvam*—existence; *mahā-īśvaram*—[as] the almighty ruler; *bhūta*—[of] living beings; *mūḍhāḥ*—the bewildered; *avajānanti*—deride; *mām*—Me; *āśritam*—[as] having accepted; *mānuṣīm tanum*—a [perishable] human body.

Being unacquainted with My supreme existence as the almighty ruler of all beings, the bewildered deride Me as having accepted a [perishable and limited] human body. (9.11)

*moghāśā mogha-karmāṇo mogha-jñānā vicetasah
rākṣasīm āsurīm caiva prakṛtiṁ mohinīm śritāḥ*

vicetasah—those whose minds are thus bewildered; *mogha-āśāḥ*—[having] vain hopes; *mogha-karmāṇaḥ*—futile actions; *mogha-jñānāḥ*—[and] pointless knowledge; *śritāḥ*—have embraced; *rākṣasīm*—a malignant; *āsurīm*—materialistic; *ca eva*—and indeed; *mohinīm*—delusive; *prakṛtiṁ*—nature.

Those whose minds are thus bewildered, being filled with vain hopes, futile actions, and pointless knowledge, have

embraced a malignant, materialistic, and delusive nature. (9.12)

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam*

tu — but; *mahā-ātmānaḥ* — the highly self-realized; *pārtha* — O son of Pṛthā; *āśritāḥ* — having embraced; *daivīm* — the divine; *prakṛtim* — nature; *ananya-manasaḥ* — [and] whose minds are fixed in exclusivity; *bhajanti* — worship; *mām* — Me; *jñātvā* — knowing [Me]; *ādim* — [as] the origin; *bhūta* — of all beings; *avyayam* — [and] immutable.

But the highly self-realized, O Pārtha, who have embraced the divine nature and whose minds are fixed exclusively on Me, worship Me, knowing Me as the origin of all beings and immutable. (9.13)

*satatam kīrtayanto mām yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā nitya-yuktā upāsate*

dṛḍha-vratāḥ — such devotees of firm vows; *satatam kīrtayantaḥ* — who are always engaged in glorifying; *mām* — Me; *yatantaḥ ca* — who are perseverant [in their practice]; *namasyantaḥ ca* — and who bow down [to Me]; *nitya-yuktāḥ* — [they] being ever united with Me [through meditative absorption]; *upāsate* — worship; *mām* — Me; *bhaktyā* — with devotion.

Such devotees of firm vows, who are always engaged in glorifying Me, who are perseverant in their practice and who bow down to Me — they, being ever united with Me [through meditative absorption], worship Me with devotion. (9.14)

*jñāna-yajñena cāpy anye yajanto mām upāsate
ekatvena prthaktvena bahudhā viśvato-mukham*

anye api ca—and others; *yajantaḥ*—worshiping; *jñāna-yajñena*—through the *yajña* of knowledge; *upāsate*—honor; *mām*—Me; *ekatvena*—[either] as identical [with them]; *prthaktvena*—[or] as separate; *bahudhā*—[or] pluralistically [i.e., in the innumerable forms of the *devas*]; *viśvataḥ-mukham*—as He whose countenance is the universe [i.e., as the cosmic form].

And others, worshiping through the *yajña* of knowledge, honor Me, either as identical with them, or as separate, or pluralistically, as He whose countenance is the universe. (9.15)

*aham kratuḥ aham yajñāḥ svadhāham aham auśadham
mantra evāḥ aham agniḥ hutam*

aham—I [am]; *kratuḥ*—the Vedic sacrifice; *aham*—I [am]; *yajñāḥ*—the *smṛti* sacrifice; *aham*—I [am]; *svadhā*—the oblation to the forefathers; *aham*—I [am]; *auśadham*—food grains [or medicinal herbs]; *aham*—I [am]; *mantraḥ*—the *mantra*; *aham eva*—I alone [am]; *ājyam*—the ghee; *aham*—I [am]; *agniḥ*—the fire; *aham*—[and] I [am]; *hutam*—the oblation.

I am the Vedic and the *smarta* sacrifice.¹ I am the offering to the forefathers, the food grains [offered in the fire sacrifice], and the *mantra*. I alone am the ghee (clarified butter), the sacrificial fire, and the oblations offered in the fire. (9.16)

*pitāham asya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ
vedyaṁ pavitraṁ oṅkāra ṛk sāma yajur eva ca*

aham — I [am]; *pitā* — the father; *mātā* — the mother; *dhātā* — the sustainer; *pitāmahaḥ* — [and] the grandfather; *asya* — of this; *jagataḥ* — cosmos; [I am]; *vedyam* — the knowable; *pavitram* — the purifier; *om-kāra* — the sacred syllable Om; *ṛk* — the Ṛg Veda; *sāma* — the Sāma Veda; *ca eva* — and indeed; *yajuḥ* — the Yajur Veda.

I am the father, the mother, the sustainer, and the grandsire of this cosmos. I am the knowable, the purifier, the sacred syllable Om, and also the Ṛk, Sāma, and Yajur [Vedas]. (9.17)

*gatiḥ bhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇam suhṛt
prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānam nidhānam bījam avyayam*

gatiḥ — [I am] the goal; *bhartā* — the supporter; *prabhuḥ* — the controller; *sākṣī* — the witness; *nivāsaḥ* — the abode; *śaraṇam* — the refuge; *su-hṛt* — the well-wishing friend; *prabhavaḥ* — the creation; *pralayaḥ* — the dissolution; *sthānam* — the sustenance; *nidhānam* — the repository; *avyayam* — [and] the eternal; *bījam* — seed.

I am the goal, the supporter, the controller, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the well-wishing friend, the creation, the dissolution, the sustenance, the repository, and the eternal seed. (9.18)

*tapāmy aham aham varṣam nigrhṇāmy utsrjāmi ca
amṛtam caiva mṛtyuś ca sad asac cāham arjuna*

aham — I; *tapāmi* — radiate heat; [and]; *aham* — I; *nigrhṇāmi* — restrain; *ca* — and; *utsrjāmi* — send forth; *varṣam* — the rain; *aham* — I [am]; *amṛtam* — immortality; *ca eva* — and indeed; *mṛtyuḥ* — death; *ca* — as well as; *sat* — the cause; *ca* — and; *asat* — the effect; *arjuna* — O Arjuna.

I radiate heat, and I restrain and send forth the rain. I am immortality and indeed death, as well as the cause and the effect, O Arjuna. (9.19)

*trai-vidyā mām soma-pāḥ pūta-pāpā
yajñair iṣtvā svar-gatiṁ prārthayante
te puṇyam āsādyā surendra-lokam
aśnanti divyān divi deva-bhogān*

trai-vidyāḥ—the performers of the ritualistic actions prescribed in the three Vedas; *iṣtvā*—worshiping; *mām*—Me; *yajñaiḥ*—through the performance of sacrifices [offered to Indra and other *devas*]; *soma-pāḥ*—drinking *soma* juice as the remnant of sacrifice; *pūta*—[and] becoming thus purified; *pāpāḥ*—of sins; *prārthayante*—pray; *svaḥ-gatiṁ*—[to attain] the heavenly realm; *āsādyā*—having reached; *puṇyam*—the meritorious; *lokam*—abode; *sura-indra*—[of] Indra; *te*—they; *aśnanti*—enjoy; *divyān*—the celestial; *deva-bhogān*—pleasures of the *devas*; *divi*—in heaven.

The performers of the ritualistic actions prescribed in the three Vedas [*Ṛk*, *Sāma*, and *Yajur*], worshiping Me through the performance of sacrifices [offered to Indra and other *devas*], drinking *soma* juice as the remnant of sacrifice, and becoming thus purified from sin, pray to attain the heavenly realm. Having reached the meritorious abode of Lord Indra,² they enjoy the celestial pleasures of the *devas* in heaven. (9.20)

*te taṁ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṁ viśālam
kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti
evaṁ trayī-dharmam anuprapannā
gatāgataṁ kāma-kāmā labhante*

bhuktvā—having enjoyed; *tam*—that; *viśālam*—extensive [pleasure]; *svarga-lokam*—[of] the heavenly sphere; *kṣīṇe*—[and] having exhausted; *puṇye*—their stock of piety; *te*—they; *viśanti*—enter [i.e., return to]; *martya-lokam*—the mortal world; *evam*—thus; *anuprapannāḥ*—those who are devoted to; *dharmam*—the fruitive rituals; *trayī*—prescribed in the three Vedas; *kāma-kāmāḥ*—[and] who seek material pleasures; *labhante*—attain; *gata-āgatam*—coming and going [i.e., birth and death].

Having enjoyed the extensive pleasures of the heavenly sphere and having exhausted their stock of piety, they return to the mortal world. Thus, those who are devoted to the fruitive rituals prescribed in the three Vedas and who seek material pleasures come and go repeatedly. (9.21)

*ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṃ nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṃ vahāmy aham*

ye—those; *janāḥ*—people; *ananyāḥ*—[who are] exclusively devoted [to Me]; *paryupāsate*—[and] who worship; *mām*—Me; *cintayantaḥ*—being constantly absorbed in meditation [on Me]; *teṣāṃ*—for them; *nitya-abhiyuktānām*—who are ever united [with Me]; *aham*—I; *vahāmi*—bear [the responsibility]; *yoga*—to furnish their needs; *kṣemam*—[and] to protect their possessions.

Those people who are exclusively devoted to Me and who worship Me, being constantly absorbed in meditation on Me—for them, who are ever united with Me, I bear the responsibility to furnish their needs and to protect their possessions. (9.22)

*ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te 'pi mām eva kaunteya yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam*

kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; *ye api*—even those; *bhaktāḥ*—devotees; *anya*—[of] other; *devatā*—*devas*; *yajante*—who worship [the *devas*]; *anvitāḥ*—being endowed; *śraddhayā*—with faith; *te api*—they too; *yajanti*—worship; *mām eva*—Me alone; *avidhi-pūrvakam*—[although] in an improper manner.

O son of Kuntī, even those devotees of other *devas* who worship them, being endowed with faith, actually worship Me alone, although in an improper manner. (9.23)

*aham hi sarva-yajñānām bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca
na tu mām abhijānanti tattvenātaś cyavanti te*

hi—indeed; *aham eva*—I alone [am]; *bhoktā ca*—the enjoyer [i.e., He for whom the sacrifice is intended]; *prabhuḥ ca*—and the master [i.e., He who bestows the results of sacrifice]; *sarva*—[of] all; *yajñānām*—*yajñas*; *tu*—but; *te*—they; *na abhijānanti*—do not know; *mām*—Me; *tattvena*—in truth; *ataḥ*—[and] therefore; *cyavanti*—they fall down.

Indeed, I alone am the one for whom all *yajñas* are intended and the one who bestows their results. But they do not know Me in truth and, therefore, they fall down. (9.24)

*yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti mad-yājino 'pi mām*

deva-vratāḥ—the worshipers of the *devas*; *yānti*—go; *devān*—to the *devas*; *pitṛ-vratāḥ*—the worshipers of the forefathers; *yānti*—go; *pitṛn*—to the forefathers; *bhūta-ijyāḥ*—the worshipers of spirit entities; *yānti*—go; *bhūtāni*—to the

spirits; [while]; *mat* — My; *yājinaḥ* — worshipers; *yānti* — attain; *mām api* — even to Me.

The worshipers of the *devas* go to the *devas*, the worshipers of the forefathers go to the forefathers, the worshipers of spirit entities go to the spirits, while My worshipers attain even to Me. (9.25)

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

[if]; *yaḥ* — one; *bhaktyā* — endowed with devotion; *prayacchati* — offers; *me* — Me; *patraṁ* — a leaf; *puṣpaṁ* — a flower; *phalam* — a fruit; *toyam* — [or] water; *ahaṁ* — I; *aśnāmi* — accept; *tat* — that [offering]; *prayata-ātmanaḥ* — of such a pure-hearted person; *bhakti-upahṛtam* — presented with devotion.

If one endowed with devotion offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, I accept the offering of such a pure-hearted person presented with devotion. (9.26)

*yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam*

yat — whatever; *karoṣi* — you do; *yat* — whatever; *aśnāsi* — you eat; *yat* — whatever; *juhoṣi* — you offer in sacrifice; *yat* — whatever; *dadāsi* — you donate in charity; *yat* — [and] whatever; *tapasyasi* — austerities you perform; *kaunteya* — O son of Kuntī; *kuruṣva* — do; *tat* — that; *arpaṇam* — as an offering; *mat* — unto Me.

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as *yajña*, whatever you donate in charity, and whatever

austerities you perform, O son of Kuntī, do all of that as an offering unto Me. (9.27)

*śubhāśubha-phalair evaṁ mokṣyase karma-bandhanaiḥ
sannyāsa-yoga-yuktātmā vimukto mām upaiśyasi*

evaṁ — in this way; *mokṣyase* — you will be freed; *bandhanaiḥ* — from the bondage; *karma* — [of] action; *phalaiḥ* — [and] from its results; *śubha* — [both] auspicious; *aśubha* — [and] inauspicious; *yukta-ātmā* — [with] your mind absorbed; *yoga* — [in] the yoga; *sannyāsa* — [of] detachment from the fruits of action; *vimuktaḥ* — [and] being thus liberated; *upaiśyasi* — you will attain; *mām* — Me.

In this way, you will be freed from the bondage of action and its auspicious and inauspicious results. With your mind absorbed in the yoga of detachment from the results of action, and being thus liberated, you will attain Me. (9.28)

*samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ
ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpy aham*

aham — I [am]; *samaḥ* — equal; *sarva-bhūteṣu* — to all beings; *na asti* — there is no one; *dveṣyaḥ* — detestable; *na* — nor; *priyaḥ* — dear; *me* — to Me; *tu* — but; *ye* — those who; *bhajanti* — worship; *mām* — Me; *bhaktyā* — with devotion; *te* — they; *mayi* — [are] in Me; *ca* — and; *aham api* — I too [am]; *teṣu* — in them.

I am equal to all beings. There is no one detestable or dear to Me, but those who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I am also in them. (9.29)

*api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

cet—if; *su-durācāraḥ api*—even a person who is exceedingly ill-behaved; *bhajate*—worships; *mām*—Me; *ananya-bhāk*—being imbued with exclusive devotion; *saḥ*—he; *mantavyaḥ*—should be regarded; *sādhur eva*—[as] indeed virtuous; *hi*—because; *saḥ*—he [is]; *samyak*—rightly; *vyavasitaḥ*—resolved.

If a person, who although exceedingly ill-behaved, is imbued with exclusive devotion and worships Me, he should be regarded as indeed virtuous, for he is rightly resolved. (9.30)

*kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*

kṣipram—very quickly; *bhavati*—he becomes; *dharmātmā*—righteous; *nigacchati*—[and] attains; *śaśvat*—eternal; *śāntim*—peace; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *pratijānīhi*—proclaim it [boldly]; [that]; *me*—My; *bhaktaḥ*—devotee; *na praṇaśyati*—never perishes.

Very quickly he becomes righteous-minded and attains eternal peace. O son of Kuntī, proclaim it boldly that My devotee never perishes. (9.31)

*mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parām gatim*

pārtha—O son of Pṛthā; *ye api*—even those; *syuḥ*—who are; *pāpa-yonayaḥ*—of sinful birth; *striyaḥ*—women; *vaiśyāḥ*—merchants and farmers; *tathā*—and; *śūdrāḥ*—the laborer class; *te api*—they also; *vyapāśritya*—taking refuge; *mām*—of

Me; *hi* — certainly; *yānti* — attain; *parām* — the supreme; *gatim* — destination.

O Pārtha, even those of sinful birth,³ women, merchants and farmers (*vaiśyas*), and also the laborer class (*śūdras*), by taking refuge in Me certainly attain the supreme destination. (9.32)

*kim punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayas tathā
anityam asukhaṁ lokam imaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām*

kim punaḥ — what to speak of; *puṇyāḥ* — pious; *brāhmaṇāḥ* — *brāhmaṇas*; *tathā* — and; *rāja-ṛṣayaḥ* — royal sages; *bhaktāḥ* — [who are] devoted [to Me]; [therefore]; *prāpya* — having attained; *imaṁ* — this; *anityam* — impermanent; *lokam* — body [or world]; *asukham* — devoid of beatitude; *bhajasva* — you should worship; *mām* — Me.

Then what doubt can there be that pious *brāhmaṇas* and royal sages who are devoted to Me [also attain the supreme destination]? Therefore, having acquired this impermanent body devoid of beatitude, you should worship Me. (9.33)

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiśyasi yuktvaivam ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

bhava — be; *mat-manāḥ* — one whose mind is fixed on Me; *mat-bhaktaḥ* — a devotee of Mine; *mat-yājī* — a worshiper of Me; *namas-kuru* — [and] offer obeisances; *mām* — unto Me; *yuktvā* — uniting; *ātmānam* — the self [with Me]; *evam* — in this manner; *mat-parāyaṇaḥ* — [and] being intently devoted to Me; *eśyasi* — you will attain; *mām eva* — Me alone.

Fix your mind on Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer obeisances to Me. Uniting the self with Me in this manner and being intently devoted to Me, you will attain Me alone. (9.34)



1. There are two types of sacrifices: Vedic sacrifices (*kratu*), executed according to the process described in the Vedas, and the *smārta* sacrifices, executed according to the descriptions given in the Smṛtis.

2. Indra is the master of the heavenly sphere.

3. This verse is spoken in context of Pūrva-mīmāṃsā (a theological school followed within the *varṇāśrama* system), which was prevalent when the *Gītā* was spoken. In this system, a *brāhmaṇa* was considered pious because of his dedication to the study of the Vedas and due to leading a life of austerity and contentment. Only a *brāhmaṇa* was considered eligible to enter the fourth stage of life, called *sannyāsa*, and become qualified for liberation, *mokṣa*. Women, merchants, farmers, and the labor class were barred from taking to the life of *sannyāsa*. They would attain a more evolved status in their next life and be born as *brāhmaṇas* ultimately. Hence, these births were considered as inferior only from the relativistic and hence limited point of view that adjudged such births as an impediment to liberation in this very life. Sinful birth refers to birth in a family that lives by committing violence, such as fishing or butchering.

CHAPTER 10

THE PATH OF AWARENESS OF GOD'S IMMANENCE

VIBHŪTI-YOGA

There are forty-two verses in this chapter, seven spoken by Arjuna and thirty-five by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa concluded Chapter 9 by advocating exclusive surrender to Him. He was, however, not yet satisfied with what He had already disclosed about Himself in Chapter 9. As the devotee longs to know the glories of God in detail, so too God is eager to speak confidentially to His loving devotee, Arjuna. So by His grace, without any inquiry from Arjuna, He begins to explain the process of meditation on the Absolute as immanent within the world.

Kṛṣṇa's heart melts for His devotee, and it is for this reason that He describes His majesty (2–6). The next four verses disclose the heart of *Bhagavad Gītā*, meaning its essence in the form of pure *bhakti-yoga* (8–11). Arjuna becomes overwhelmed when he hears of Bhagavān's compassion for His devotees and praises Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He asks Kṛṣṇa to tell him in detail of His divine yogic power and His glories. He desires to hear about Kṛṣṇa's majesty in detail so that he can meditate upon Him while pursuing his worldly duties (12–18).

The remainder of the chapter offers a detailed description of Kṛṣṇa's immanence within this world in the form of His majesty (19–39). Kṛṣṇa concludes that there is no end to His opulences, the whole world being but a manifestation of just a fragment of Him: "And whatever is the genesis of all living beings, O Arjuna, that also I am. Therefore, there is no such

being, movable or immovable, that can exist without Me. There is no end to My divine opulences, O tormentor of the enemies. This elaboration of My opulences is but a summary description, spoken by Me” (39–40). Having described His most prominent glories, Kṛṣṇa concludes by stating that the entire cosmos is but a manifestation of a single fraction of His power (42).

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
bhūya eva mahā-bāho śṛṇu me paramam vacaḥ
yat te 'haṁ prīyamāṇāya vakṣyāmi hita-kāmyayā*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *mahā-bāho* — O mighty-armed; *śṛṇu* — hear; *bhūyaḥ eva* — once again; *me* — My; *paramam* — supreme; *vacaḥ* — words; *yat* — because; *prīyamāṇāya* — you delight [in them]; *aham* — I; *vakṣyāmi* — shall speak; *te* — to you; *hita-kāmyayā* — for your welfare.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O mighty-armed, hear again My supreme words. Because you delight in them, I shall speak to you for your welfare. (10.1)

*na me viduḥ sura-gaṇāḥ prabhavam na maharṣayaḥ
aham ādir hi devānām maharṣiṇām ca sarvaśaḥ*

na — neither; *sura-gaṇāḥ* — the divine beings; *na* — nor; *mahā-ṛṣayaḥ* — the great sages; *viduḥ* — know [the reality of]; *me* — My; *prabhavam* — birth; *hi* — because; *sarvaśaḥ* — in all respects; *aham* — I [am]; *ādiḥ* — the source; *devānām* — of the divine beings, *devas*; *ca* — and; *mahā-ṛṣiṇām* — of the great sages.

Neither the divine beings (*suras*) nor the great sages (*maharṣis*) know the reality of My birth, because in all respects I am the source of the divine beings and the great sages. (10.2)

*yo mām ajam anādim ca vetti loka-maheśvaram
asammūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate*

yaḥ — one who; *vetti* — knows; *mām* — Me; *ajam* — as birthless; *anādim* — as beginningless; *ca* — and; *loka-mahā-īśvaram* — as

the almighty Ruler of all beings; *saḥ* — he; *asammūḍhaḥ* — undeluded; *martyeṣu* — among mortals; *pramucyate* — is freed; *sarva-pāpaiḥ* — from all sins.

One who knows Me as birthless, beginningless, and as the almighty Ruler of all beings, is undeluded among mortals and freed from all sins. (10.3)

*buddhir jñānam asammohaḥ kṣamā satyaṁ damaḥ śamaḥ
sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavo 'bhāvo bhayaṁ cābhayaṁ eva ca
ahiṁsā samatā tuṣṭis tapo dānaṁ yaśo 'yaśaḥ
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṁ matta eva pṛthag-vidhāḥ*

buddhiḥ — the faculty of subtle discrimination; *jñānam* — knowledge; *asammohaḥ* — sobriety; *kṣamā* — forgiveness; *satyaṁ* — truthfulness; *damaḥ* — control of the external senses; *śamaḥ* — control of the mind; *sukhaṁ* — happiness; *duḥkhaṁ* — misery; *bhavaḥ* — birth; *abhāvaḥ* — death; *bhayaṁ* — fear; *ca* — and; *abhayaṁ* — fearlessness; *eva ca* — as well as; *ahiṁsā* — non-violence; *samatā* — equanimity; *tuṣṭiḥ* — contentment; *tapo* — austerity; *dānaṁ* — charity; *yaśaḥ* — fame; *ayaśaḥ* — [and] infamy; *pṛthag-vidhāḥ* — these different types; *bhāvāḥ* — [of] dispositions; *bhūtānāṁ* — of living beings; *bhavanti* — are born; *matta eva* — from Me alone.

The faculty of subtle discrimination, knowledge, sobriety, forgiveness, truthfulness, control of the external senses, control of the mind, happiness, misery, birth, death, fear, and fearlessness, as well as non-violence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame, and infamy — all these different types of dispositions of living beings are born of Me alone. (10.4–5)

*maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve catvāro manavas tathā
mad-bhāvā mānasā jātā yeṣāṃ loka imāḥ prajāḥ*

sapta—the seven; *mahā-ṛṣayaḥ*—great sages; *pūrve*—[and] before [them]; *catvāraḥ*—the four [Kumāras]; *tathā*—and; *manavaḥ*—the [fourteen] Manus; *jātāḥ*—were born; *mānasāḥ*—of My mind [i.e., My intentionality]; *mat-bhāvāḥ*—which is a manifestation of My intrinsic being; *yeṣāṃ*—of [i.e., from] them; *imāḥ*—these; *prajāḥ*—created beings; *loke*—[have appeared] in this world.

The seven sages, and before them the four Kumāras and the fourteen Manus, were born of My mind, which is a manifestation of My intrinsic being. From them, the created beings have appeared in this world. (10.6)

*etāṃ vibhūtiṃ yogam ca mama yo vetti tattvataḥ
so 'vikalpena yogena yujyate nātra saṁśayaḥ*

yaḥ—one who; *vetti*—knows; *tattvataḥ*—in truth; *mama*—My; *vibhūtiṃ*—supreme glory; *ca*—and; *etāṃ*—this; *yogam*—yoga [of devotion unto Me]; *saḥ*—he; *yujyate*—is endowed; *avikalpena yogena*—with unflinching yoga; *na saṁśayaḥ*—there is no doubt; *atra*—about this.

One who knows in truth My supreme glory and this yoga of devotion to Me is endowed with unflinching yoga. There is no doubt about this. (10.7)

*aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

aham—I [am]; *prabhavaḥ*—the source; *sarvasya*—of everything; *sarvaṃ*—everything; *pravartate*—proceeds;

mattaḥ—from Me; *iti matvā*—knowing thus; *budhāḥ*—the wise; *bhāva-samanvitāḥ*—endowed with devotion; *bhajante*—worship; *mām*—Me.

I am the source of everything, and everything proceeds from Me. Knowing thus, the wise, endowed with devotion, worship Me. (10.8)

*mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā
bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca mām nityam
tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca*

mat-cittāḥ—those whose minds are fixed upon Me; *mat-gata-prāṇāḥ*—[and] whose very life is consecrated unto Me; *tuṣyanti*—feel great satisfaction; *ca*—and; *ramanti*—take delight; *ca*—also; *nityam*—ever; *bodhayantaḥ*—enlightening; *parasparam*—each other; *ca*—and; *kathayantaḥ*—conversing; *mām*—about Me.

Those whose minds are attached to Me and whose very life is consecrated unto Me feel great satisfaction and delight, by ever enlightening each other and conversing about Me. (10.9)

*teṣām satata-yuktānām bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ tam yena mām upayānti te*

teṣām—to them; *satata-yuktānām*—who are ever united; *bhajatām*—[and] who worship [Me]; *prīti-pūrvakam*—with affection; *dadāmi*—I bestow; *tam*—that; *buddhi-yogaṁ*—heart wisdom [love]; *yena*—by which; *te*—they; *upayānti*—come; *mām*—to Me.

To these devotees who are thus ever united with Me and who worship Me with affection, I bestow the heart wisdom [love] by which they come to Me. (10.10)

*teṣām evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jam tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*

anukampā-artham eva — just to bless; *teṣām* — them; *aham* — I; *sthaḥ* — situated; *ātma-bhāva* — in their consciousness; *nāśayāmi* — destroy; *tamaḥ* — the darkness; *ajñāna-jam* — born of ignorance; *bhāsvatā* — with the shining; *dīpena* — lamp; *jñāna* — of wisdom.

Just to bless them, I, situated in their consciousness, destroy the darkness born of ignorance with the shining lamp of wisdom. (10.11)

*arjuna uvāca
param brahma param dhāma pavitram paramam bhavān
puruṣam śāśvatam divyam ādi-devam ajam vibhum
āhuḥ tvām ṛṣayaḥ sarve devarṣir nāradaś tathā
asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayaṁ caiva bravīṣi me*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna said; *bhavān* — You; *param* — [are] the supreme; *brahma* — Absolute Truth; *param* — the supreme; *dhāma* — shelter; *paramam* — [and] supremely; *pavitram* — pure; *sarve* — all; *ṛṣayaḥ* — the sages; *deva-ṛṣiḥ* — [such as] the celestial sage; *nāradaḥ* — Nārada; *asitaḥ* — Asita; *devalaḥ* — Devala; *tathā* — and; *vyāsaḥ* — Vyāsa; *āhuḥ* — call; *tvām* — You; *śāśvatam* — the eternal; *divyam* — divine; *puruṣam* — person; *ādi-devam* — the primeval deity; *ajam* — birthless; *vibhum* — [and] omnipresent; *ca* — and; *svayaṁ* — You Yourself; *eva* — indeed; *bravīṣi* — are telling; *me* — me [the same].

Arjuna said: You are the supreme Absolute Truth, the supreme shelter and supremely pure. All the sages — such as the celestial sage Nārada, Asita, Devala, and Vyāsa — call You the eternal divine person, the primeval deity, birthless, and omnipresent. And You Yourself indeed are telling me the same. (10.12–13)

*sarvam etad ṛtaṁ manye
yan mām vadasi keśava
na hi te bhagavan vyaktim
vidur devā na dānavāḥ*

keśava — O Kṛṣṇa; *yat* — what; *vadasi* — You say; *mām* — to me; *sarvam* — all; *etat* — that; *manye* — I regard; *ṛtam* — as true; *bhagavan* — O Bhagavan; *hi* — indeed; *na* — neither; *devāḥ* — the *devas*; *na* — nor; *dānavāḥ* — the *dānavas*; *viduḥ* — know; *te* — [of] Your; *vyaktim* — appearance.

O Keśava, all that You say to me, I regard as true. O Lord, indeed, neither the *devas* nor the *dānavas* (materialists) know [the truth] of Your appearance. (10.14)

*svayam evātmanātmānam
vettha tvam puruṣottama
bhūta-bhāvana bhūteśa
deva-deva jagat-pate*

puruṣa-uttama — O Supreme Person; *bhūta-bhāvana* — O origin of all beings; *bhūta-īśa* — O almighty regulator of beings; *deva-deva* — O worshipful Lord of all the *devas*; *jagat-pate* — O Lord of the cosmos; *tvam* — You; *svayam eva* — Yourself; *vettha* — know; *ātmānam* — Yourself; *ātmanā* — by Yourself.

O Supreme Person, O origin of all beings, O almighty regulator of beings, O worshipful Lord of all the *devas*, O Lord of the cosmos, You alone know Yourself by Yourself. (10.15)

*vaktum arhasy aśeṣeṇa divyā hy ātma-vibhūtayaḥ
yābhir vibhūtibhir lokān imāms tvam vyāpya tiṣṭhasi*

tvam hi—only You; *arhasi*—are able; *vaktum*—to describe; *aśeṣeṇa*—fully; *ātma*—Your own; *divyāḥ*—divine; *vibhūtayaḥ*—glories; *yābhiḥ*—by which; *vibhūtibhiḥ*—glories; *tiṣṭhasi*—You exist; *vyāpya*—pervading; *imān*—these; *lokān*—worlds.

Therefore, only You can fully describe Your divine glories, by which You exist pervading all these worlds. (10.16)

*katham vidyām aham yogims tvām sadā paricintayan
keṣu keṣu ca bhāveṣu cintyo 'si bhagavan mayā*

yogin—O master of the *yoga-māyā* potency; *bhagavan*—O Bhagavān; *katham*—in what manner; *paricintayan*—should [You] be contemplated; *sadā*—constantly; [so that]; *aham*—I; *vidyām*—may know; *tvām*—You; *ca*—and; *keṣu keṣu*—in which various; *bhāveṣu*—objects; *asi*—are You; *cintyaḥ*—to be meditated upon; *mayā*—by me.

O master of the *yoga-māyā* potency, O Bhagavān, in what manner should You be contemplated constantly so that I may know You? And in which various objects are You to be meditated upon by me? (10.17)

*vistareṇātmano yogaṁ vibhūtiṁ ca janārdana
bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptir hi śṛṇvato nāsti me 'mṛtam*

janārdana — O Janārdana; *kathaya* — tell [me]; *bhūyaḥ* — again; *vistareṇa* — in detail; *ātmanaḥ* — of Your; *yogam* — powers; *ca* — and; *vibhūtim* — glories; *hi* — because; *śṛṇvataḥ* — on hearing; *amṛtam* — [Your] ambrosial [words]; *me* — my; *tr̥ptiḥ* — satiation; *na asti* — has not come about.

O Janārdana, tell me again in detail about Your powers and glories, for I am not yet satiated by listening to Your ambrosial words. (10.18)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*hanta te kathayiṣyāmi divyā hy ātma-vibhūtayaḥ
prādhānyataḥ kuru-śreṣṭha nāsty anto vistarasya me*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *hanta* — My dear; *kuru-śreṣṭha* — O best of the Kurus; *kathayiṣyāmi* — I shall inform; *te* — you; *prādhānyataḥ* — [only of] the principal; *divyāḥ* — divine; *ātma-vibhūtayaḥ* — glories of Mine; *hi* — because; *na asti* — there is no; *antaḥ* — limit; *vistarasya* — of the manifestations; *me* — of Mine.

Śrī Bhagavān said: My dear, O best of the Kurus, I shall inform you only of My principal divine glories, for there is no limit to My manifestations. (10.19)

*aham ātmā guḍākeśa sarva-bhūtāśaya-sthitaḥ
aham ādiś ca madhyam ca bhūtānām anta eva ca*

guḍākeśa — O Arjuna; *aham* — I [am]; *ātmā* — the Self; *āśaya-sthitaḥ* — situated in the heart; *sarva-bhūta* — of all beings; *aham eva* — I indeed [am]; *ādiḥ* — the beginning; *ca* — and; *madhyam* — the middle; *ca* — and; *antaḥ* — the end; *ca* — as well; *bhūtānām* — of all living beings.

O Guḍākeśa, I am the Self, situated in the hearts of all beings; I indeed am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all of them. (10.20)

*ādityānām aham viṣṇur jyotiṣām ravir amśumān
marīcir marutām asmi nakṣatrāṇām aham śaśī*

ādityānām — of the Ādityas; *aham* — I [am]; *viṣṇuḥ* — Viṣṇu; *jyotiṣām* — of the luminaries; *amśumān* — [I am] the radiant; *raviḥ* — sun; *marutām* — of the Maruts; *asmi* — I am; *marīciḥ* — Marīci; *nakṣatrāṇām* — [and] of lunar constellations; *aham* — I [am]; *śaśī* — the moon.

Among the twelve sons of Aditi, I am Viṣṇu; of luminaries, I am the radiant sun; of the forty-nine Maruts, I am Marīci; and among the lunar constellations (*nakṣatras*),¹ I am the moon. (10.21)

*vedānām sāma-vedo 'smi devānām asmi vāsavaḥ
indriyāṇām manaś cāsmi bhūtānām asmi cetanā*

vedānām — of the Vedas; *asmi* — I am; *sāma-vedaḥ* — the *Sāma Veda*; *devānām* — of the *devas*; *asmi* — I am; *vāsavaḥ* — Indra; *indriyāṇām* — of the senses; *asmi* — I am; *manaḥ* — the mind; *ca* — and; *bhūtānām* — of all living beings; *asmi* — I am; *cetanā* — consciousness [i.e., the power of cognition].

Of the Vedas I am the *Sāma Veda*; among the *devas* I am Indra; of the senses I am the mind; and in living beings I am the power of cognition. (10.22)

*rudrāṇām śaṅkaraś cāsmi vittiśo yakṣa-rakṣasām
vasūnām pāvakaś cāsmi meruḥ śikhariṇām aham*

rudrāṇām — of all the Rudras; *asmi* — I am; *śaṅkaraḥ* — Śiva; *ca* — and; *yakṣa-rakṣasām* — of the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas; *vitta-īśaḥ* — [I am] Kubera; *vasūnām* — of the Vasus; *asmi* — I am; *pāvakaḥ* — fire; *ca* — and; *śikhariṇām* — of all mountains; *aham* — I [am]; *meruḥ* — Meru.

Among the eleven Rudras, I am Śaṅkara; of the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, I am Kubera; of the eight Vasus, I am Pāvaka (fire); and among mountains, I am Meru. (10.23)

*purodhasām ca mukhyam
mām viddhi pārtha brhaspatim
senānīnām aham skandah
sarasām asmi sāgarah*

pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *viddhi* — know; *mām* — Me; *brhaspatim* — as Brhaspati; *mukhyam* — the foremost; *purodhasām* — of the priests; *senānīnām* — of the army leaders; *aham* — I [am]; *skandah* — Kārttikeya [the son of Śiva]; *ca* — and; *sarasām* — of all reservoirs of water; *asmi* — I am; *sāgarah* — the ocean.

O Pārtha, know Me to be Brhaspati, the foremost among the priests; of army leaders, I am Skanda; and among reservoirs of water, I am the ocean. (10.24)

*maharṣīṇām bhṛgur aham girām asmy ekam akṣaram
yajñānām japa-yajño 'smi sthāvarāṇām himālayaḥ*

mahā-ṛṣīṇām — among the great sages; *aham* — I [am]; *bhṛguḥ* — Bhṛgu; *girām* — of language; *asmi* — I am; *ekam* — the single; *akṣaram* — imperishable syllable [Praṇava]; *yajñānām* — of sacrifices; *asmi* — I am; *japa-yajñaḥ* — the meditational repetition of sacred sound; *sthāvarāṇām* — [and] of immovable objects; *himālayaḥ* — [I am] the Himālaya.

Among the great sages I am Bhṛgu; of language I am the imperishable monosyllable Om; among sacrifices I am the meditational repetition of sacred sound [*mantra* and *nāma-japa*]; and among immovable objects I am the Himālaya. (10.25)

*aśvatthaḥ sarva-vṛkṣāṇām devaṛṣiṇām ca nāradaḥ
gandharvāṇām citrarathaḥ siddhānām kapilo muniḥ*

sarva-vṛkṣāṇām — of all trees; *aśvatthaḥ* — [I am] the banyan tree; *deva-ṛṣiṇām* — of the celestial sages; *nāradaḥ* — [I am] Nārada; *gandharvāṇām* — of the Gandharvas; *citrarathaḥ* — [I am] Citraratha; *ca* — and; *siddhānām* — of the perfected beings; *muniḥ* — [I am] the sage; *kapilaḥ* — Kapila.

Of all trees I am the Aśvattha² tree; of the celestial sages I am Nārada; of Gandharvas I am Citraratha, and among the perfected beings (*siddhas*) I am the sage Kapila. (10.26)

*uccaiḥśravasam aśvānām viddhi mām amṛtodbhavam
airāvataṁ gajendrāṇām narāṇām ca narādhipam*

aśvānām — among horses; *viddhi* — know; *mām* — Me; *uccaiḥśravasam* — as Uccaiḥśravā; *amṛta-udbhavam* — produced from the churning of the ocean for nectar; *airāvataṁ* — as Airāvata; *gaja-indrāṇām* — among lordly elephants; *ca* — and; *nara-adhipam* — as the king; *narāṇām* — among human beings.

Among horses know Me as Uccaiḥśravā, born of the churning of the ocean for nectar;³ among lordly elephants, as Airāvata, and among human beings, as the king. (10.27)

*āyudhānām aham vajram dhenūnām asmi kāmadhuk
prajānaś cāsmi kandarpaḥ sarpāṇām asmi vāsukiḥ*

āyudhānām—of weapons; aham—I [am]; vajram—the thunderbolt; dhenūnām—of milk cows; asmi—I am; kāmadhuk—the Kāmadhenu; prajānaḥ—of procreative passion; asmi—I am; kandarpaḥ—Cupid; ca—and; sarpāṇām—of serpents; asmi—I am; vāsukiḥ—Vāsuki.

Of weapons I am the thunderbolt; of cows I am the Kāmadhenu [which fulfills desires]; of procreative passion I am Cupid (Kandarpa), and of serpents, I am Vāsuki. (10.28)

*anantaś cāsmi nāgānām varuṇo yādasām aham
pitṛṇām aryamā cāsmi yamaḥ saṁyamatām aham*

nāgānām—of the many-hooded serpents; asmi—I am; anantaḥ—Ananta; ca—and; yādasām—of aquatics; aham—I [am]; varuṇaḥ—Varuṇa; pitṛṇām—of the forefathers; asmi—I am; aryamā—Aryamā; ca—and; saṁyamatām—of regulators; aham—I [am]; yamaḥ—Yama.

Among nāgas⁴ I am Ananta; of aquatic beings I am Varuṇa; of the forefathers I am Aryamā; and of regulators of the law I am Yama. (10.29)

*prahlādaś cāsmi daityānām kālāḥ kalayatām aham
mṛgāṇām ca mṛgendro 'ham vainateyaś ca pakṣiṇām*

daityānām—of Daityas; asmi—I am; prahlādaḥ—Prahāda; ca—and; kalayatām—of impelling forces; aham—I [am]; kālāḥ—time; ca—and; mṛgāṇām—of animals; aham—I [am]; mṛga-indraḥ—the lion; ca—and; pakṣiṇām—of birds; vainateyaḥ—Garuḍa.

Among Daityas I am Prahlāda; of impelling forces I am time; among animals I am the lion; and among birds I am Garuḍa. (10.30)

*pavanaḥ pavatām asmi rāmaḥ śastra-bhṛtām aham
jhaṣāṇām makaraś cāsmi srotasām asmi jāhnavī*

pavatām—of purifiers; *asmi*—I am; *pavanaḥ*—the wind; *śastra-bhṛtām*—of the wielders of weapons; *aham*—I [am]; *rāmaḥ*—Rāma; *jhaṣāṇām*—of fish; *asmi*—I am; *makaraḥ*—a mythological aquatic animal resembling a shark or dolphin; *ca*—and; *srotasām*—of rivers; *asmi*—I am; *jāhnavī*—Gaṅgā.

Among purifiers I am the wind; among wielders of weapons I am Rāma; among fish I am the *makara*; and of rivers I am Gaṅgā. (10.31)

*sargāṇām ādir antaś ca
madhyam caivāham arjuna
adhyātma-vidyā vidyānām
vādaḥ pravadatām aham*

aham eva—I indeed [am]; *ādiḥ*—the beginning; *antaḥ*—the end; *ca*—and; *madhyam*—the middle; *sargāṇām*—of all manifested phenomena; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *vidyānām*—of knowledge systems; [I am]; *adhyātma-vidyā*—knowledge concerning the transcendental Self; *ca*—and; *pravadatām*—of the various methods of logical argumentation; *aham*—I [am]; *vādaḥ*—conclusive reasoning.

I am the beginning, the end, and the middle of all manifested phenomena, O Arjuna. Of knowledge systems I am knowledge concerning the transcendental Self, and of the various

methods of logical argumentation I am conclusive reasoning.
(10.32)

*akṣarāṇām a-kāro 'smi
dvandvaḥ sāmāsikasya ca
aham evākṣayaḥ kālo
dhātāhaṁ viśvato-mukhaḥ*

akṣarāṇām — of letters; *asmi* — I am; *a-kāraḥ* — the letter “a;” *ca* — and; *sāmāsikasya* — of compounds; *dvandvaḥ* — the dual compound; *aham eva* — I indeed [am]; *akṣayaḥ* — eternal; *kālaḥ* — time; [and]; *aham* — I [am]; *dhātā* — Brahmā; *viśvataḥ-mukhaḥ* — who faces all directions.

Of letters I am the letter “a,” and of compound words I am the dual compound (*dvandva*). I indeed am eternal time, and I am Brahmā who faces all directions. (10.33)

*mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraś cāham udbhavaś ca bhaviṣyatām
kīrtiḥ śrīḥ vāk ca nārīṇām smṛtir medhā dhṛtiḥ kṣamā*

aham — I [am]; *mṛtyuḥ* — death; *sarva-haraḥ* — which snatches away everything; *ca* — and; [I am]; *udbhavaḥ* — the birth; *bhaviṣyatām* — of future manifestations; *ca* — as well; *nārīṇām* — among women; [I am]; *kīrtiḥ* — fame; *śrīḥ* — prosperity; *vāk* — speech; *smṛtiḥ* — memory; *medhā* — intelligence; *dhṛtiḥ* — fortitude; *ca* — and; *kṣamā* — forgiveness.

I am death which snatches away everything, and I am the birth of all that will come to be. Among women, I am the presiding goddesses of fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, fortitude, and forgiveness. (10.34)

*br̥hat-sāma tathā sām̐nām gāyatrī chandasām aham
māsānām mār̥ga-śīrṣaḥ 'ham ṛtūnām kusumākaraḥ*

sām̐nām—of the hymns of the *Sāma Veda*; *aham*—I [am]; *br̥hat-sāma*—the *Br̥hat-sāma*; *tathā*—and; *chandasām*—of meters; [I am]; *gāyatrī*—Gāyatrī; *māsānām*—of months; *aham*—I [am]; *mār̥ga-śīrṣaḥ*—Mār̥ga-śīrṣa [November–December]; *ṛtūnām*—[and] of seasons; [I am]; *kusuma-ākaraḥ*—spring.

Of the hymns of the *Sāma Veda*, I am the *Br̥hat-sāma*, of meters I am Gāyatrī, of months I am Agrahāyaṇa,⁵ and of seasons I am spring. (10.35)

*dyūtaṁ chalayatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham
jaya 'smi vyavasāyo 'smi sattvaṁ sattvavatām aham*

chalayatām—of frauds; *asmi*—I am; *dyūtaṁ*—gambling; [and]; *tejasvinām*—of the powerful; *aham*—I [am]; *tejaḥ*—prowess; *asmi*—I am; *jayaḥ*—victory; *asmi*—I am; *vyavasāyaḥ*—endeavor; [and]; *aham*—I [am]; *sattvaṁ*—the strength; *sattva-vatām*—of the strong.

Of frauds I am gambling, and of the powerful I am prowess. I am victory, I am endeavor, and I am the strength of the strong. (10.36)

*vṛṣṇīnām vāsudevo 'smi pāṇḍavānām dhanañjayaḥ
munīnām apy ahaṁ vyāsaḥ kavīnām uśanā kaviḥ*

vṛṣṇīnām—of the Vṛṣṇis; *asmi*—I am; *vāsudevaḥ*—Vāsudeva [Balarāma]; *pāṇḍavānām*—of the Pāṇḍavas; [I am]; *dhanañjayaḥ*—Arjuna; *munīnām*—of the sages; *apy*—also; *aham*—I [am]; *vyāsaḥ*—Vyāsa; *kavīnām*—[and] of the wise; [I am]; *kaviḥ*—the sagacious; *uśanā*—Uśanā [Śukrācārya].

Among the Vṛṣṇis I am Vāsudeva (Balarāma).⁶ Among the Pāṇḍavas I am Dhanañjaya (Arjuna). Among *munis* (great thinkers) I am Vyāsa, and among the wise, the sagacious Śukrācārya. (10.37)

*daṇḍo damayatām asmi nītir asmi jigīṣatām
maunaṁ caivāsmi guhyānām jñānaṁ jñānavatām aham*

damayatām — of subduers; *asmi* — I am; *daṇḍaḥ* — punishment; *jigīṣatām* — of those desirous of victory; *asmi* — I am; *nītiḥ* — diplomacy; *ca* — and; *eva* — indeed; *guhyānām* — of secrets; *asmi* — I am; *maunam* — silence; *jñāna-vatām* — [and] of the wise; *aham* — I [am]; *jñānam* — wisdom.

Of subduers I am punishment. Of those desirous of victory I am diplomacy. Of secrets I am silence, and of the wise I am wisdom. (10.38)

*yac cāpi sarva-bhūtānām bījam tad aham arjuna
na tad asti vinā yat syān mayā bhūtaṁ carācaram*

yat ca — and whatever; *bījam* — [is] the seed [i.e., the genesis]; *sarva-bhūtānām* — of all living beings; *arjuna* — O Arjuna; *tat api* — that also; *aham* — I [am]; *na asti* — there is no; *tat* — such; *bhūtam* — being; *cara-acaram* — movable or immovable; *yat* — which; *syāt* — exists; *vinā* — without; *mayā* — Me.

And whatever is the genesis of all living beings, O Arjuna, that also I am. Therefore, there is no such being, movable or immovable, that can exist without Me. (10.39)

*nānto 'sti mama divyānām vibhūtīnām parantapa
eṣa tūddeśataḥ prokto vibhūter vistaro mayā*

na asti—there is no; *antaḥ*—end; *divyānām*—of the divine; *vibhūtīnām*—opulences; *mama*—of Mine; *param-tapa*—O tormentor of the enemies; *eṣaḥ*—this; *vistarahaḥ*—elaboration; *vibhūteḥ*—of [My] opulences; *tu*—however; *uddeśataḥ*—[is] just a summary description; *proktaḥ*—spoken; *mayā*—by Me.

There is no end to My divine opulences, O tormentor of the enemies. This elaboration of My opulences is but a summary description, spoken by Me. (10.40)

*yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā
tat tad evāvagaccha tvaṁ mama tejo 'mśa-sambhavam*

yat yat eva—whatsoever; *sattvam*—existent; *vibhūtimat*—[is] glorious; *śrīmat*—opulent; *vā*—or; *ūrjitam*—powerful; *tvam*—you; *avagaccha*—should know; *tat tat*—that; *eva*—indeed; *sambhavam*—[to be] manifested; *aṁśa*—[from] a portion; *mama*—of My; *tejah*—splendor.

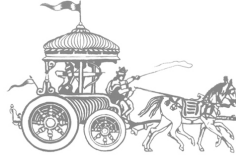
Whatsoever in existence is glorious, opulent, or powerful, know that indeed to be manifested from a portion of My splendor. (10.41)

*atha vā bahunaitena kiṁ jñātena tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat*

atha vā—otherwise; *kim*—of what avail is it; *tava*—to you; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *jñātena*—by knowing; *etena*—all this; *bahunā*—in detail; *eka aṁśena*—by a single fraction [of My power]; *aham*—I; *sthitaḥ*—remain situated; *viṣṭabhya*—pervading; *idaṁ*—this; *kṛtsnam*—entire; *jagat*—cosmos.

But of what avail is it to you, O Arjuna, to know all of this in detail? By a single fraction of My power I remain situated,

pervading this entire cosmos. (10.42)



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1. There are 27 *nakṣatras*, lunar constellations, or mansions, through which the moon passes. The moon is not counted among them but is considered as the Lord of *nakṣatras*.
 2. The Aśvattha tree is a kind of fig tree and commonly found in India. It is also known as the Pīpal tree in Hindi.
 3. This relates to the Purāṇic story of the churning of the Ocean of Milk by the *devas* and *asuras* to extract nectar.
 4. A *nāga* is a type of snake with many hoods.
 5. Agrahāyaṇa is the first month of the traditional Indian calendar and usually occurs in November–December.
 6. The name Vāsudeva means “the son of Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa’s father,” and it usually refers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this case, however, since Kṛṣṇa cannot be His own *vibhūti*, the name is understood as referring to Balarāma instead, who was also a son of Vasudeva.

CHAPTER 11

THE PATH OF DISCLOSURE OF THE COSMIC FORM

VIŚVARŪPA-DARŚANA-YOGA

This chapter has fifty-five verses. Eight are spoken by Sañjaya, thirty-three by Arjuna, and fourteen by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In Chapter 10, Arjuna became aware of the Lord's special grace. In this chapter, full of awe, he pleads with Śrī Kṛṣṇa to reveal His majestic form (1–4). Śrī Kṛṣṇa complies and awards Arjuna with divine vision, so that he can see His most astonishing form (5–8).

Sañjaya gives a description of Kṛṣṇa's cosmic form as being effulgent like thousands of suns, and having unlimited faces, hands, and legs (9–14). Seeing this most marvelous, but also fearsome feature, Arjuna becomes awestruck. He describes his vision in sixteen verses (15–30) and then asks Kṛṣṇa what His intention is in assuming this terrifying form. Kṛṣṇa replies that He is the embodiment of time, who has appeared to destroy all the assembled warriors. He implores Arjuna to engage in battle and kill the enemies, who have already been slain by Him (32–34).

Sañjaya describes that, upon hearing this, Arjuna was terrified and in a faltering voice addresses Kṛṣṇa (35). He glorifies Him, pays respects to Him repeatedly, and asks for forgiveness for past misbehavior when he treated Kṛṣṇa on an equal level as a friend, not knowing His majesty. Arjuna declares that no one is equal or superior to Kṛṣṇa and that He is worshipable even by other divinities. He pleads with Kṛṣṇa to tolerate his misgivings, just like an affectionate parent tolerates the ill

behavior of a child, a bosom friend that of a friend, and a lover that of a beloved (36–44). Finally, Arjuna entreats Kṛṣṇa to reveal His four-armed form (45–46). Being pleased with him, Kṛṣṇa shows Arjuna His four-armed form and then resumes His original humanlike form (47–49). Seeing this, Arjuna feels very peaceful and happy (51). Kṛṣṇa then informs Arjuna that His form is not easily perceived. One can see it only through devotion to Him. Kṛṣṇa concludes that His devotee, who is engaged in service to Him, free from all material attachments and enmity, attains Him (52–55).

arjuna uvāca

*mad-anugrahāya paramaṁ guhyam adhyātma-saṅjñitam
yat tvayoktaṁ vacas tena moho 'yaṁ vigato mama*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna said; *ayam* — this; *mohaḥ* — delusion; *mama* — of mine; *vigataḥ* — has been dispelled; *tena* — by that; *vacas* — discourse; *yat* — which; *saṅjñitam* — has imparted [i.e., which concerns]; *parama* — the supremely; *guhyam* — confidential; *adhyātma* — knowledge of the Self; *uktaṁ* — spoken; *tvayā* — by You; *mat-anugrahāya* — as a blessing to me.

Arjuna said: My delusion has been completely dispelled by [hearing] Your discourse concerning the supremely confidential knowledge of the Self, which You have delivered as a blessing to me. (11.1)

*bhavāpyayau hi bhūtānāṁ śrutau vistaraśo mayā
tvattaḥ kamala-patrākṣa māhātmyam api cāvyayam*

kamala-patra-akṣa — O lotus-eyed one; *bhava* — the origin; *apyayau* — [and] dissolution; *bhūtānām* — of all living beings; *śrutau* — have been heard; *mayā* — by me; *vistaraśaḥ* — in detail; *tvattaḥ* — from You; *hi* — indeed; *ca* — and; *avyayam* — [Your] inexhaustible; *māhātmyam* — glory; *api* — also [has been heard].

O lotus-eyed Lord, I have heard from You in detail of the origin and dissolution of all beings and about Your inexhaustible glory. (11.2)

*evam etad yathāttha tvam ātmānaṁ parameśvara
draṣṭum icchāmi te rūpam aiśvaram puruṣottama*

parama-īśvara — O Supreme Regulator; *yathā* — as; *tvam* — You; *āttha* — have described; *ātmānam* — Yourself; *etat* — this; *evam* — exactly [You are]; *puruṣa-uttama* — O Supreme Person; *icchāmi* — I desire; *draṣṭum* — to see; *te* — Your; *aiśvaram* — majestic; *rūpam* — form.

O Supreme Regulator, You are exactly as You have described Yourself. O Supreme Person, I desire to see Your majestic form. (11.3)

*manyase yadi tac chakyaṁ mayā draṣṭum iti prabho
yogeśvara tato me tvam darśayātmānam avyayam*

prabho — O Master; *yadi* — if; *manyase* — You think; *iti* — thus; [that]; *tat* — that [majestic form]; *śakyam* — is able; *draṣṭum* — to be seen; *mayā* — by me; *tataḥ* — then; *yoga-īśvara* — O Master of yoga; *tvam* — [may] You; *darśaya* — reveal; *ātmānam* — Your; *avyayam* — imperishable [form]; *me* — to me.

O Master, if You think that Your imperishable form can be seen by me, then, O Master of yoga, reveal it to me. (11.4)

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ
nānā-vidhāni divyāni nānā-varṇākṛtīni ca*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *pārtha* — O son of Prthā; *paśya* — behold; *me* — My; *divyāni* — divine; *rūpāṇi* — forms; *śataśaḥ* — [in] hundreds; *atha* — and; *sahasraśaḥ* — thousands; *nānā-vidhāni* — multifarious; *ca* — and; *nānā* — of variegated; *varṇa* — colors; *ākṛtīni* — [and] shapes.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Pārtha, behold My divine forms in hundreds and thousands, multifarious and of various colors

and shapes. (11.5)

*paśyādityān vasūn rudrān aśvinau marutas tathā
bahūny adrṣṭa-pūrvāṇi paśyāścaryāṇi bhārata*

paśya — behold; *bhārata* — O descendant of Bharata; *ādityān* — [the twelve] sons of Aditi; *vasūn* — [the eight] Vasus; *rudrān* — [the eleven] Rudras; *aśvinau* — the two Aśvinīs; *tathā* — and; *marutaḥ* — [the forty-nine] Maruts; *paśya* — see; *bahūni* — the many; *āścaryāṇi* — wonderful [forms]; *adrṣṭa* — not witnessed; *pūrvāṇi* — before.

Behold, O descendant of Bharata, the twelve Ādityas, the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, the twin Aśvins, and the forty-nine Maruts [in My majestic form]. See the many wonderful forms which have never been witnessed before. (11.6)

*ihaika-stham jagat kṛtsnam paśyādya sa-carācaram
mama dehe guḍākeśa yac cānyad draṣṭum icchasi*

guḍākeśa — O Arjuna; *paśya* — behold; *adya* — now; *kṛtsnam* — the entire; *jagat* — universe; *sacara-acaram* — of movable and immovable beings; *ca* — and; *yac anyat* — whatever else; *icchasi* — you desire; *draṣṭum* — to see; *iha* — [situated] here; *eka-stham* — in one place; *mama dehe* — in My body.

O Guḍākeśa, behold now the entire universe of movable and immovable beings, and anything else that you desire to see, all situated here in one place in My body. (11.7)

*na tu mām śakyase draṣṭum anenaiva sa-cakṣuṣā
divyaṁ dadāmi te cakṣuḥ paśya me yogam aiśvaram*

tu — but; *na śakyase* — you are unable; *draṣṭum* — to see; *mām* — Me; *anena eva* — merely with these; *sva-cakṣuṣā* — eyes of yours; [therefore]; *dadāmi* — I give; *te* — to you; *divyam* — divine; *cakṣuḥ* — vision; *paśya* — behold; *me* — My; *yogam aiśvaram* — majestic form.

But you cannot see Me merely with these eyes of yours. Therefore, I grant you divine vision. Behold My majestic form. (11.8)

sañjaya uvāca

evam uktvā tato rājan mahā-yogeśvaro hariḥ

darśayāmāsa pārthāya paramam rūpam aiśvaram

sañjayaḥ uvāca — Sañjaya said; *rājan* — O King; *uktvā* — having spoken; *evam* — thus; *hariḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *mahā-yoga-īśvaraḥ* — the great master of *yoga*; *tataḥ* — then; *darśayāmāsa* — showed; *paramam* — [His] supreme; *aiśvaram* — majestic; *rūpam* — form; *pārthāya* — to Arjuna.

Sañjaya said: O King, having spoken thus, Hari, the great master of *yoga*, next showed His supreme majestic form to Pārtha. (11.9)

aneka-vaktra-nayanam anekādbhuta-darśanam

aneka-divyābharaṇam divyānekodyatāyudham

divya-mālyāmbara-dharam divya-gandhānulepanam

sarvāścarya-mayaṁ devam anantaṁ viśvato-mukham

[Arjuna saw Bhagavān's cosmic form]; *aneka* — [having] many; *vaktra* — mouths; *nayanam* — [and] eyes; *aneka* — [disclosing] myriad; *adbhuta* — astonishing; *darśanam* — sights; *aneka* — [adorned with] innumerable; *divya* — celestial; *ābharaṇam* — ornaments; *aneka* — [and wielding] many; *udyata* — uplifted;

divya — divine; *āyudham* — weapons; *dharam* — wearing; *divya* — divine; *mālya* — garlands; *ambara* — [and] dresses; *anulepanam* — anointed with; *divya* — heavenly; *gandha* — fragrances; *sarva āścarya-mayam* — full of all wonders; *devam* — resplendent; *anantam* — infinite; *viśvataḥ-mukham* — [and] having faces on all sides.

[Arjuna saw Bhagavān's cosmic form] having many mouths and eyes, disclosing myriad astonishing sights, adorned with innumerable celestial ornaments, wielding many uplifted divine weapons, wearing divine garlands and dresses, anointed with heavenly fragrances, full of all wonders, resplendent, infinite, and having faces on all sides. (11.10-11)

*divi sūrya-sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā
yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād bhāsaḥ tasya mahātmanah*

yadi — if; *bhāḥ* — the effulgence; *sūrya sahasrasya* — of a thousand suns; *bhaved* — were; *utthitā* — to appear; *yugapat* — simultaneously; *divi* — in the sky; *sā* — that [effulgence]; *syāt* — might; *sadṛśī* — resemble; *bhāsaḥ* — the splendor; *mahā-ātmanah* — of that cosmic form; *tasya* — of His.

If the effulgence of a thousand suns were to appear simultaneously in the sky, it might resemble somewhat the splendor of His cosmic form. (11.12)

*tatraika-stham jagat kṛtsnam pravibhaktam anekadhā
apaśyad deva-devasya śarīre pāṇḍavas tadā*

tadā — then; *pāṇḍavaḥ* — the son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; *apaśyat* — saw; *kṛtsnam* — the entire; *jagat* — universe; *anekadhā* — manifoldly; *pravibhaktam* — divided; *tatra eka-stham* — situated

there in one place; *śarīre* — in the body; *deva-devasya* — of the Lord of the *devas*.

Then Arjuna, the son of Pāṇḍu, saw the entire universe with its manifold divisions situated there in one place in the body of the Lord of the *devas*. (11.13)

*tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hr̥ṣṭa-romā dhanañjayaḥ
praṇamya śirasā devam kṛtāñjalir abhāṣata*

tataḥ — thereafter; *saḥ* — he; *dhanam-jayaḥ* — Arjuna; *vismaya-āviṣṭaḥ* — filled with wonder; *hr̥ṣṭa-romā* — [and] his bodily hairs standing on end in ecstasy; *praṇamya* — bowing; *śirasā* — his head; *abhāṣata* — spoke; *devam* — to Bhagavān; *kṛta-añjaliḥ* — with palms joined together in supplication.

Thereafter, Arjuna, filled with wonder and his bodily hairs standing on end in ecstasy, bowed his head and spoke to Bhagavān with palms joined together in supplication. (11.14)

*arjuna uvāca
paśyāmi devāṁs tava deva dehe
sarvāṁs tathā bhūta-viśeṣa-saṅghān
brahmāṇam īśam kamalāsana-stham
ṛṣīṁś ca sarvān uragāṁś ca divyān*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna said; *deva* — O Lord; *tava dehe* — in Your body; *paśyāmi* — I see; *sarvān* — all; *devān* — the *devas*; *tathā* — and; *viśeṣa-saṅghān* — hosts of unique; *bhūta* — living beings; *brahmāṇam* — Brahmā; *kamala-āsana-stham* — sitting on the lotus flower; *īśam* — Śiva; *ca* — and; *sarvān* — all; *ṛṣīn* — the sages; *ca* — and; *divyān* — the celestial; *uragān* — serpents.

Arjuna said: O Lord, in Your body I see all the *devas* and hosts of unique living beings, Brahmā situated on his lotus seat, Śiva, all the sages, and the celestial serpents. (11.15)

*aneka-bāhūdara-vaktra-netraṁ
paśyāmi tvāṁ sarvato 'nanta-rūpam
nāntaṁ na madhyaṁ na punas tavādim
paśyāmi viśveśvara viśva-rūpa*

viśva-īśvara — O Master of the universe; *viśva-rūpa* — O Cosmic Form; *paśyāmi* — I see; *tvāṁ* — You; *sarvataḥ* — in all directions; *ananta-rūpam* — having an unlimited form; *aneka* — [possessing] innumerable; *bāhu* — arms; *udara* — bellies; *vaktra* — mouths; *netraṁ* — [and] eyes; *punaḥ* — yet; *paśyāmi* — I can see; *na antaṁ* — neither the end; *na madhyam* — nor the middle; *na ādim* — nor the beginning; *tava* — of You.

O Master of the universe, O Cosmic Form (Viśvarūpa), I see You in all directions, having an unlimited form possessing innumerable arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes. Yet, I can see neither Your end, nor Your middle, nor Your beginning. (11.16)

*kirīṭinaṁ gadinam cakriṇam ca
tejo-rāśim sarvato dīptimantam
paśyāmi tvāṁ durnirīkṣyam samantād
dīptānalārka-dyutim aprameyam*

paśyāmi — I see; *tvāṁ* — You; *samantāt* — everywhere; *kirīṭinaṁ* — [adorned with] helmet; *gadinam* — mace; *ca* — and; *cakriṇam* — disc; *tejaḥ-rāśim* — [displaying] a massive radiance; *dīptimantam* — resplendent; *sarvataḥ* — on all sides; *durnirīkṣyam* — very difficult to behold; *dyutim* — [having] an effulgence; *dīpta-*

anala — [like] blazing fire; *arka* — [and] the sun; *aprameyam* — [and] immeasurable.

I see You everywhere adorned with helmet, mace, and disc, displaying a massive radiance of light, resplendent on all sides, very difficult to behold, having an effulgence like that of the sun and of blazing fire, and immeasurable. (11.17)

*tvam akṣaram paramam veditavyam
tvam asya viśvasya param nidhānam
tvam avyayaḥ śāśvata-dharma-goptā
sanātanas tvam puruṣo mato me*

me — [in] my; *mataḥ* — opinion; *tvam* — You [are]; *paramam* — the supreme; *akṣaram* — imperishable [Brahman]; *veditavyam* — [and] the entity to be realized [by the aspirants for liberation]; *tvam* — You [are]; *param* — the supreme; *nidhānam* — shelter; *asya* — of this; *viśvasya* — universe; *tvam* — You [are]; *avyayaḥ* — imperishable; *śāśvata-dharma-goptā* — [and] the guardian of the eternal *dharma*; *tvam* — You [are]; *sanātanaḥ* — the eternal; *puruṣaḥ* — Supreme Person.

In my opinion, You are the supreme imperishable Brahman and the entity to be realized [by the aspirants for liberation]. You are the supreme shelter of this universe. You are imperishable and the guardian of the eternal *dharma*. You are the eternal Supreme Person. (11.18)

*anādi-madhyāntam ananta-vīryam
ananta-bāhum śaśi-sūrya-netram
paśyāmi tvāṁ dīpta-hutāśa-vaktram
sva-tejasā viśvam idaṁ tapantam*

paśyāmi—I see; *tvām*—You; *anādi*—[as being] without beginning; *madhya*—middle; *antam*—[or] end; *ananta*—[as endowed with] infinite; *vīryam*—prowess; *ananta*—[having] infinite; *bāhum*—arms; *śaśi*—[with] the moon; *sūrya*—[and] sun; *netram*—[as Your] eyes; *dīpta-hutāśa-vaktram*—[and] a mouth like blazing fire; *tapantam*—scorching; *idam*—this; *viśvam*—universe; *sva-tejasā*—with Your own brilliance.

I see You as without beginning, middle, or end, as endowed with infinite prowess, having infinite arms, with the moon and sun as Your eyes, and a mouth like blazing fire, scorching this universe with Your own brilliance. (11.19)

*dyāv ā-prthivyor idam antaram hi
vyāptam tvayaikena diśaś ca sarvāḥ
dṛṣṭvādbhutam rūpam ugram tavedam
loka-trayam pravyathitam mahātman*

idam—this; *antaram*—interim space; *dyau*—[between] heaven; *ā-prthivyoḥ*—[and] earth; *ca*—and; *sarvāḥ*—all; *diśaḥ*—directions; *vyāptam*—are pervaded; *tvayā*—by You; *ekena*—alone; *hi*—certainly; *dṛṣṭvā*—by seeing; *idam*—this; *adbhutam*—astonishing; *ugram*—terrible; *rūpam*—form; *tava*—of Yours; *mahā-ātman*—O Great Being; *loka-trayam*—the three worlds; *pravyathitam*—are extremely perturbed.

This interim space between heaven and earth and all directions are entirely pervaded by You alone. Seeing this astonishing, terrible form of Yours, O Great Being, the three worlds are extremely perturbed. (11.20)

*amī hi tvām sura-saṅghā viśanti
kecid bhītāḥ prāñjalayo grṇanti*

*svastīty uktvā maharṣi-siddha-saṅghāḥ
stuvanti tvām stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ*

amī—these; *sura-saṅghāḥ*—hosts of *devas*; *hi*—verily; *viśanti*—are entering; *tvām*—into You; *kecit*—some; *bhītāḥ*—being frightened; *grṇanti*—are praising [You]; *prāñjalayaḥ*—with palms joined in supplication; *mahā-ṛṣi*—[while] the great sages; *siddha-saṅghāḥ*—[and] hosts of perfected beings; *uktvā*—uttering; *iti*—thus; *svasti*—“let there be universal wellbeing;” *stuvanti*—are extolling; *tvām*—You; *puṣkalābhiḥ*—[with] magnificent; *stutibhiḥ*—hymns.

These hosts of *devas* are verily entering into You. Some, being frightened, are praising You with palms joined in supplication, while multitudes of great sages and perfected beings, uttering “let there be universal wellbeing” (*svasti*), are extolling You with magnificent hymns. (11.21)

*rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā
viśve ’śvinau marutaś coṣmapāś ca
gandharva-yakṣāsura-siddha-saṅghā
vīkṣante tvām vismitāś caiva sarve*

rudra—the Rudras; *ādityāḥ*—the Ādityas; *vasavaḥ*—the Vasus; *ca*—and; *ye*—those [known as]; *sādhyāḥ*—the Sādhyas; *viśve*—the Viśvadevas; *aśvinau*—the Aśvinī-kumāras; *ca*—and; *marutaḥ*—the Maruts; *ca*—and; *uṣma-pāḥ*—the forefathers; *ca*—as well as; *saṅghāḥ*—the hosts; *gandharva*—of Gandharvas; *yakṣa*—Yakṣas; *asura*—Asuras; *siddha*—[and] Siddhas; *sarve*—all these; *eva*—indeed; *vīkṣante*—are beholding; *tvām*—You; *vismitāḥ*—in amazement.

The Rudras, the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Viśvadevas, the twin Aśvins, the Maruts, the forefathers, as

well as the hosts of Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras, and Siddhas
— all these indeed are beholding You in amazement. (11.22)

*rūpaṁ mahat te bahu-vaktra-netraṁ
mahā-bāho bahu-bāhūru-pādam
bahūdaram bahu-daṁṣṭrā-karālaṁ
dṛṣṭvā lokāḥ pravyathitās tathāham*

mahā-bāho — O Mighty-Armed Lord; *dṛṣṭvā* — seeing; *te* — Your; *mahat* — immense; *rūpaṁ* — form; *bahu* — [equipped with] innumerable; *vaktra* — faces; *netraṁ* — [and] eyes; *bahu* — [with] unlimited; *bāhu* — arms; *ūru* — thighs; *pādam* — [and] feet; *bahu-udaram* — [with] many bellies; *bahu-daṁṣṭrā-karālaṁ* — [and] countless terrible fangs; *lokāḥ* — the worlds; *tathā* — and; *aham* — I; *pravyathitāḥ* — are awestruck.

O Mighty-Armed Lord, seeing Your immense form equipped with innumerable faces and eyes, with unlimited arms, thighs and feet, with many bellies and countless terrible fangs, the worlds are awestruck and so am I. (11.23)

*nabhaḥ-sprśaṁ dīptaṁ aneka-varṇaṁ
vyāttānanaṁ dīpta-viśāla-netraṁ
dṛṣṭvā hi tvāṁ pravyathitāntar-ātmā
dhṛtim na vindāmi śamaṁ ca viṣṇo*

viṣṇo — O Viṣṇu; *dṛṣṭvā* — seeing; *tvāṁ* — You; *nabhaḥ-sprśaṁ* — whose form touches the sky; *dīptaṁ* — effulgent; *aneka* — [of] myriad; *varṇaṁ* — colors; *vyātta* — [with] gaping; *ānanaṁ* — mouth; *dīpta* — [and] blazing; *viśāla* — gigantic; *netraṁ* — eyes; *antaḥ ātmā* — my heart; *pravyathita* — is overcome by fear; *na vindāmi* — [and] I cannot obtain; *hi* — at all; *dhṛtim* — fortitude; *ca* — and; *śamaṁ* — peace [i.e., stability of mind].

O Viṣṇu, seeing Your form which touches the sky, full of effulgence, of myriad colors, with gaping mouth and blazing gigantic eyes, my heart is overcome by fear and I cannot at all secure fortitude nor peace. (11.24)

*daṁṣṭrā-karālāni ca te mukhāni dṛṣṭvaiva kālānala-sannibhāni
diśo na jāne na labhe ca śarma prasīda deveśa jagan-nivāsa*

dṛṣṭvā — seeing; *eva* — indeed; *te* — Your; *mukhāni* — faces; *daṁṣṭrā-karālāni* — [with] terrible fangs; *ca* — and; *sannibhāni* — resembling; *kāla-anala* — the fire of dissolution; *na jāne* — I cannot distinguish; *diśaḥ* — the directions; *ca* — and; *na labhe* — nor can I find; *śarma* — peace; *deva-īśa* — O Master of the *devas*; *jagat-nivāsa* — O Abode of the Cosmos; *prasīda* — be merciful [unto me].

Indeed, seeing Your faces with terrible fangs and blazing like the fire of dissolution, I cannot distinguish one direction from another, nor can I find peace. O Master of the *devas*, O Abode of the Cosmos, be merciful unto me. (11.25)

*amī ca tvām dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ
sarve sahaivāvani-pāla-saṅghaiḥ
bhīṣmo droṇaḥ sūta-putras tathāsau
sahāsmadīyair api yodha-mukhyaiḥ
vaktrāṇi te tvaramāṇā viśanti
daṁṣṭrā-karālāni bhayānakāni
kecid vilagnā daśanāntareṣu
sandrśyante cūrṇitair uttamāṅgaiḥ*

sarve — all; *amī* — these; *putrāḥ* — sons; *dhṛtarāṣṭrasya* — of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *saha* — along with; *saṅghaiḥ* — the hosts; *avani-pāla* — [of] kings [lit., protectors of the earth]; *eva* — indeed; *ca*

— as well as; *bhīṣmaḥ* — Bhīṣma; *droṇaḥ* — Droṇa; *tathā* — and; *asau* — that; *sūta-putraḥ* — Karna; *saha* — together with; *yodha-mukhyaiḥ* — the chief warriors; *asmadīyaiḥ* — of ours; *api* — also; *tvaramāṇāḥ* — are rushing; *tvām* — toward You; *viśanti* — entering; *te* — Your; *bhayānakāni* — dreadful; *vaktrāṇi* — jaws; *daṁṣṭrā-karālāni* — with terrifying fangs; *kecit* — some [of these warriors]; *sandṛśyante* — are seen; *uttama-aṅgaiḥ* — [with] heads; *cūrṇitaiḥ* — smashed; *vilagnāḥ* — stuck; *daśana-antareṣu* — between Your teeth.

All these sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, along with the hosts of kings, as well as Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and Karna, together with the chief warriors on our side, are rushing toward You, entering Your dreadful jaws with terrifying fangs. Some of these warriors can be seen with smashed heads stuck between Your teeth. (11.26–27)

*yathā nadīnām bahavo 'mbu-vegāḥ
samudram evābhimukhā dravanti
tathā tavāmī nara-loka-vīrā
viśanti vaktrāṇy abhivijvalanti*

yathā — as; *bahavaḥ* — myriad; *ambu-vegāḥ* — water currents; *nadīnām* — of the rivers; *dravanti* — rush; *abhimukhāḥ* — toward; *samudram* — the sea; *eva* — only; *tathā* — similarly; *amī* — these; *nara-loka-vīrāḥ* — heroes among men; *viśanti* — are entering; *tava* — Your; *abhivijvalanti* — flaming; *vaktrāṇi* — mouths.

As myriad water currents of the rivers rush only toward the sea, so also these heroes among men are entering Your flaming mouths. (11.28)

yathā pradīptam jvalanam pataṅgā viśanti nāśāya samṛddha-vegāḥ

tathaiva nāśāya viśanti lokās tavāpi vaktrāṇi samṛddha-vegāḥ

yathā — as; *pataṅgāḥ* — moths; *viśanti* — enter; *pradīptam* — a blazing; *jvalanam* — fire; *samṛddha* — [with] great; *vegāḥ* — speed; *nāśāya* — for destruction; *tathā eva* — similarly; *lokāḥ* — [these] people; *api* — also; *viśanti* — are entering; *tava* — Your; *vaktrāṇi* — mouths; *samṛddha-vegāḥ* — with great speed; *nāśāya* — for doom.

As moths enter a blazing fire with great speed only for self-destruction, similarly these people too are rushing into Your mouths with great speed to meet their doom. (11.29)

lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāl lokān samagrān vadanair jvaladbhiḥ

tejobhir āpūrya jagat samagram bhāsas tavogrāḥ pratapanti viṣṇo

grasamānaḥ — devouring; *samagrān* — all; *lokān* — [these] people; *jvaladbhiḥ* — with [Your] blazing; *vananaiḥ* — mouths; *lelihyase* — You are licking them up; *samantāt* — from all sides; *viṣṇo* — O Viṣṇu; *tava* — Your; *ugrāḥ* — fierce; *bhāsaḥ* — glow; *pratapanti* — is scorching; *sagram* — the entire; *jagat* — universe; *āpūrya* — filling [it]; *tejobhiḥ* — with [its] radiance.

Devouring all these people with Your blazing mouths, You are licking them up from all sides. O Viṣṇu, Your fierce glow is scorching the entire universe, filling it with its radiance. (11.30)

ākhyāhi me ko bhavān ugra-rūpo namo 'stu te deva-vara prasīda vijñātum icchāmi bhavantam ādyaṁ na hi prajānāmi tava

pravṛttim

ākhyāhi—please tell; *me*—me; *kaḥ*—who; *bhavān*—You [are]; *ugra-rūpaḥ*—O ferocious one; *deva-vara*—O best of the *devas*; *astu*—let there be; *namaḥ*—salutations; *te*—to You; *prasīda*—please be gracious; *icchāmi*—I wish; *vijñātum*—to know; *bhavantam*—You; *ādyam*—the primeval being; *hi*—since; *na prajānāmi*—I do not know; *tava*—Your; *pravṛttim*—purpose.

Please tell me who You are, O ferocious one. O best of the devas, I offer salutations to You, please be gracious. I wish to know You, the primeval being, since I do not comprehend Your purpose. (11.31)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*kālo 'smi loka-kṣaya-kṛt pravṛddho lokān samāhartum iha pravṛttaḥ
ṛte 'pi tvām na bhaviṣyanti sarve ye 'vasthitāḥ prati-anīkeṣu
yodhāḥ*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *kālaḥ*—time; *asmi*—I am; *pravṛddhaḥ*—the mighty; *kṣaya-kṛt*—annihilator; *loka*—[of] the worlds; *pravṛttaḥ*—I am engaged; *iha*—here; *samāhartum*—to destroy; *lokān*—these people; *ṛte api*—even without; *tvām*—you [killing them]; *sarve*—all these; *yodhāḥ*—warriors; *ye*—who; *avasthitāḥ*—are situated; *prati-anīkeṣu*—on the enemy's side; *na bhaviṣyanti*—will not survive.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Time I am, the mighty annihilator of the worlds. I am here to destroy these people. Even without you [killing them], all these warriors on the enemy's side will not survive. (11.32)

*tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jitvā śatrūn bhuñkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham
mayaivaite nihatāḥ pūrvam eva
nimitta-mātram bhava savya-sācin*

tasmāt—therefore; *tvam*—you; *uttiṣṭha*—must stand up; *labhasva*—seize; *yaśaḥ*—fame; *jitvā*—conquer; *śatrūn*—[your] enemies; *bhuñkṣva*—[and] enjoy; *samṛddham*—the affluent; *rājyaṁ*—kingdom; *ete*—these [warriors]; *pūrvam eva*—already; *nihatāḥ*—have been killed; *mayā eva*—by Me alone; *bhava*—you are to become; *nimitta-mātram*—merely an instrument; *savya-sācin*—O Savyasācī [Arjuna].

Therefore, you must stand up, seize fame, conquer your enemies, and enjoy the affluent kingdom. These warriors have already been killed by Me alone. You are to become merely an instrument, O Savyasācī.¹ (11.33)

*droṇaṁ ca bhīṣmaṁ ca jayadrathaṁ ca
karṇaṁ tathānyān api yodha-vīrān
mayā hatāns tvaṁ jahi mā vyathiṣṭhā
yudhyasva jetāsi raṇe sapatnān*

tvam—you; *jahi*—must slay; *droṇaṁ*—Droṇa; *ca*—and; *bhīṣmaṁ*—Bhīṣma; *ca*—and; *jayadrathaṁ*—Jayadratha; *ca*—and; *karṇaṁ*—Karṇa; *tathā*—and; *anyān*—the other; *yodha-vīrān*—great warriors; *api*—also; *hatān*—who are already killed; *mayā*—by Me; *mā vyathiṣṭhāḥ*—do not be distressed; *yudhyasva*—fight; *jetā asi*—[and] you will conquer; *sapatnān*—[your] enemies; *raṇe*—in the battle.

You must slay Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Jayadratha, Karṇa, and the other great warriors as well, who are already killed by Me. Do

not be distressed. Fight, and you will conquer your enemies in the battle. (11.34)

*sañjaya uvāca
etac chrutvā vacanam keśavasya
kṛtāñjalir vepamānaḥ kirīṭī
namaskṛtvā bhūya evāha kṛṣṇam
sa-gadgadam bhīta-bhītaḥ praṇamya*

sañjayaḥ uvāca — Sañjaya said; *śrutvā* — hearing; *etat* — these; *vacanam* — words; *keśavasya* — of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *vepamānaḥ* — the trembling; *kirīṭī* — Arjuna; *namaskṛtvā* — saluting [Him]; *kṛtāñjaliḥ* — with palms joined together; *praṇamya* — [and] bowing down; *bhīta-bhītaḥ* — in extreme fear; *eva* — indeed; *āha* — spoke; *bhūyaḥ* — again; *kṛṣṇam* — to Kṛṣṇa; *sa-gadgadam* — with a faltering voice.

Sañjaya said: Hearing these words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the trembling Arjuna, saluting Him with palms joined together and bowing down in extreme fear, spoke again to Kṛṣṇa with a faltering voice. (11.35)

*arjuna uvāca
sthāne hṛṣīkeśa tava prakīrtyā jagat prahr̥ṣyaty anurajyate ca
rakṣāṁsi bhītāni diśo dravanti sarve namasyanti ca siddha-
saṅghāḥ*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna said; *hṛṣīka-īśa* — O Hṛṣīkeśa; *sthāne* — it is appropriate; *jagat* — [that] the universe; *prahr̥ṣyati* — is delighted; *ca* — and; *anurajyate* — filled with love; *prakīrtyā* — by glorification; *tava* — of You; *rakṣāṁsi* — [that] the demons; *bhītāni* — being terrified; *dravanti* — flee; *diśaḥ* — in all

directions; *ca*—and; *sarve*—[that] all; *siddha-saṅghāḥ*—the hosts of Siddhas; *namasyanti*—bow down [to You].

Arjuna said: It is appropriate, O Hṛṣīkeśa, that the universe becomes delighted and filled with love by glorifying You, that the terrified demons flee in all directions, and that all the hosts of Siddhas bow down to You. (11.36)

*kasmāc ca te na nameran mahātman
garīyase brahmaṇo 'py ādi-kartre
ananta deveśa jagat-nivāsa
tvam akṣaram sad-asat tat param yat*

mahā-ātman—O Great Being; *kasmāt*—why; *ca*—indeed; *na nameran*—should they not bow down; *te*—to You; *garīyase*—[who are] greater; *brahmaṇaḥ api*—even than Brahmā; *ādi-kartre*—being the origin even of him; *ananta*—O Unlimited One; *deva-īśa*—O Master of the *devas*; *jagat-nivāsa*—O Abode of the Cosmos; *tvam*—You [are]; *tat*—that; *akṣaram*—imperishable [Brahman]; *yat*—which [is]; *param*—beyond; *sat-asat*—cause and effect.

O Mahātman, why indeed should they not bow down to You, who are greater even than Brahmā, being the origin even of him? O Unlimited One, Master of the *devas*, Abode of the Cosmos, You are the imperishable Brahman, which is beyond cause and effect. (11.37)

*tvam ādi-devaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇas
tvam asya viśvasya param nidhānam
vettāsi vedyam ca param ca dhāma
tvayā tataṁ viśvam ananta-rūpa*

tvam — You [are]; *ādi-devaḥ* — the primeval God; *purāṇaḥ* — the primordial; *puruṣaḥ* — Supreme Person; *tvam* — You [are]; *param* — the ultimate; *nidhānam* — refuge; *asya* — of this; *viśvasya* — cosmos; *asi* — You are; *vettā* — the knower; *ca* — and; *vedyam* — the knowable; *ca* — as well as; *dhāma* — the embodiment; *param* — [of] transcendence; *ananta-rūpa* — O Limitless Form; *viśvam* — the cosmos; *tatam* — is pervaded; *tvayā* — by You.

You are the primeval God, the primordial Supreme Person. You are the ultimate refuge of this cosmos. You are the knower and the knowable, as well as the embodiment of transcendence. O Limitless Form, the cosmos is pervaded by You! (11.38)

*vāyur yamo 'gnir varuṇaḥ śaśāṅkaḥ
prajāpatis tvam prapitāmahaś ca
namo namas te 'stu sahasra-kṛtvaḥ
punaś ca bhūyo 'pi namo namas te*

tvam — You [are]; *vāyuḥ* — the wind god; *yamaḥ* — the god of death; *agniḥ* — the god of fire; *varuṇaḥ* — the god of water; *śaśa-āṅkaḥ* — the moon (Candra); *prajā-patiḥ* — the grandfather of all beings, *Brahmā*; *ca* — and; *prapitāmahaḥ* — the great-grandfather; *astu* — let there be; *namaḥ* — obeisance; *te* — to You; *sahasra-kṛtvaḥ* — a thousand times; *punaḥ ca* — and again [a thousand times more]; *namaḥ* — [let there be] obeisance [to You]; *bhūyaḥ api* — and yet again; *namaḥ namaḥ* — [let there be] repeated obeisance; *te* — to You.

You are the wind god (Vāyu), the god of death (Yama), the god of fire (Agni), the god of water (Varuṇa), the moon (Candra), the grandfather of all beings (Brahmā), and also the great grandsire [the father even of Brahmā]. My obeisance to You

thousands and thousands of times, obeisance to You again and again, repeated obeisance to You. (11.39)

namaḥ purastād atha prṣṭhataḥ te namo 'stu te sarvata eva sarva

ananta-vīryāmita-vikramas tvam sarvaṁ samāpnoṣi tato 'si sarvaḥ

sarva—O all-encompassing One; *namaḥ*—obeisance; *te*—to You; *purastāt*—from the front; *atha*—and; *prṣṭhataḥ*—from behind; *astu*—let there be; *namaḥ*—obeisance; *te*—to You; *sarvataḥ*—from all sides; *eva*—indeed; *tvam*—You; *ananta-vīrya*—who are of infinite prowess; *amita-vikramaḥ*—[and] immeasurable valor; *samāpnoṣi*—pervade; *sarvaṁ*—everything; *tataḥ*—therefore; *asi*—You are; *sarvaḥ*—everything.

O all-encompassing One, my obeisance to You from the front and from behind, obeisance to You from all sides indeed. You, who are of infinite prowess and immeasurable valor, pervade everything. Therefore, You are everything. (11.40)

sakheti matvā prasabhaṁ yad uktam

he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti

ajānatā mahimānaṁ tavedaṁ

mayā pramādāt prañayena vāpi

yac cāvahāsārtham asat-kṛto 'si

vihāra-śayyāsana-bhojaneṣu

eko 'tha vāpy acyuta tat-samakṣam

tat kṣāmaye tvām aham aprameyam

ajānatā—being unaware; *idam*—[of] this; *mahimānam*—glory; *tava*—of Yours; *matvā*—[and] thinking [of You]; *iti*—

thus; *sakhā*—[as my] friend; *yat*—whatever; *uktam*—may have been uttered; *prasabham*—brashly; *mayā*—by me; *pramādāt*—due to carelessness; *praṇayena vā api*—or indeed out of love; *iti*—[addressing You] thus; *he kṛṣṇa*—O Kṛṣṇa; *he yādava*—O Yādava; *he sakhe*—O dear Friend; *yat ca*—and for whatever [incidents]; *asi*—You may have been; *asat-kṛtaḥ*—slighted; *avahāsa-artham*—out of jest; *acyuta*—O Acyuta; *vihāra*—while at play; *śayyā*—resting; *āsana*—sitting; *bhojaneṣu*—or while eating; *ekaḥ*—[either] alone; *atha vā*—or; *api*—even; *tat-samakṣam*—in the company of others; *tat*—for all that; *aham*—I; *kṣāmaye*—beg forgiveness; *tvām*—from You; *aprameyam*—who are incomprehensible.

Being unaware of this glory of Yours and thinking of You as my friend, I may have spoken to You brashly out of carelessness, or indeed out of love, addressing You as, “O Kṛṣṇa, O Yādava, O dear Friend.” I may also have slighted You in jest, O Acyuta, while at play, resting, sitting, or eating, either alone with You or even in the company of others. For all that, I beg forgiveness from You, who are incomprehensible. (11.41–42)

*pitāsi lokasya carācarasya
tvam asya pūjyaś ca gurur garīyān*

*na tvat-samo 'sty abhyadhikaḥ kuto 'nyo
loka-traye 'py apratima-prabhāva*

tvam—You; *asi*—are; *pitā*—the father; *asya*—of this; *lokasya*—world; *cara*—of movable; *acarasya*—[and] immovable beings; *pūjyaḥ*—the most venerable; *guruḥ*—the preceptor; *ca*—and; *garīyān*—the greatest of all; *apratima-prabhāva*—O Master of unrivalled power; *na asti*—there is no; *anyaḥ*—other; *tvat-samaḥ*—equal to You; *loka-traye api*—even in all

the three worlds; *kutaḥ* — [so] how [can there be]; *abhyadhikaḥ* — anyone greater.

You are the father of this world of movable and immovable beings, the most venerable, the preceptor and the greatest of all. O Master of unrivalled power, there is none equal to You even in all the three worlds, so how could anyone be greater than You? (11.43)

*tasmāt praṇamya praṇidhāya kāyam
prasādaye tvām aham īśam īḍyam
pīteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ
priyaḥ priyāyārhasi deva soḍhum*

tasmāt — therefore; *deva* — O Lord; *praṇidhāya* — prostrating; *kāyam* — [my] body; *praṇamya* — [and] bowing down; *aham* — I; *prasādaye* — beseech; *tvām* — You; *īḍyam* — [my] worshipful; *īśam* — Master; *arhasi* — You are worthy [i.e., You ought]; *soḍhum* — to bear [i.e., to forgive my offences]; *pīteva* — as a father [forgives]; *putrasya* — [the offences] of a son; *sakheva* — as a friend [forgives]; *sakhyuḥ* — [those] of a friend; *priyaḥ* — [or as] a lover [forgives]; *priyāyārhasi* — [those] of the beloved.

Therefore, O Lord, prostrating my body and bowing down, I beseech You, my worshipful Master, to be gracious. Please forgive my offences, just as a father forgives his child, as a friend excuses a friend, or as a lover pardons the beloved. (11.44)

*adṛṣṭa-pūrvam hr̥ṣito 'smi dṛṣṭvā bhayena ca pravayathitaṁ
mano me
tad eva me darśaya deva rūpaṁ prasīda deveśa jagan-nivāsa*

asmi—I am; *hr̥ṣitaḥ*—overjoyed; *dr̥ṣtvā*—by seeing; *adr̥ṣṭa-pūrvam*—[Your Cosmic form] which has never been seen before; *ca*—and [yet]; *me*—my; *manaḥ*—mind; *pravyathitam*—is perturbed; *bhayena*—out of fear; *deva*—O Lord; *deva-īśa*—O Master of the *devas*; *darśaya*—please show; *me*—[to] me; *tat eva*—that very; *rūpam*—form [Your four-armed form]; *jagat-nivāsa*—O Abode of the Cosmos; *prasīda*—please be gracious.

I am overjoyed by seeing Your Cosmic form which has never been seen before, and yet my mind is extremely perturbed with fear. O Lord, O Master of the *devas*, please show me that very form [Your four-armed form]. O Abode of the Cosmos, please be gracious. (11.45)

kirīṭinaṁ gadinam cakra-hastam
icchāmi tvāṁ draṣṭum ahaṁ tathaiva
tenaiva rūpeṇa catur-bhujena
sahasra-bāho bhava viśva-mūrte

aham—I; *icchāmi*—wish; *draṣṭum*—to see; *tvām*—You; *tathā eva*—in that way [as before]; *kirīṭinaṁ*—[adorned] with a helmet; *gadinam*—[holding] a club; *cakra-hastam*—[and] a disc in hand; *sahasra-bāho*—O Thousand-Armed One; *viśva-mūrte*—O Cosmic Form; *bhava*—please assume; *tena eva*—that very; *rūpeṇa*—form; *catur-bhujena*—with four arms.

I wish to see You as before, adorned with a helmet and holding a mace and disc in Your hands. O Thousand-Armed One, O Cosmic Form, please assume that very form with four arms. (11.46)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
mayā prasannena tavārjunedaṁ
rūpaṁ paraṁ darśitam ātma-yogāt
tejo-mayaṁ viśvam anantam ādyam
yaṁ me tvad anyena na dṛṣṭa-pūrvam

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *prasannena*—being pleased [with you]; *mayā*—[it is] by Me; [that]; *idaṁ*—this; *param*—supreme; *tejaḥ-mayaṁ*—resplendent; *viśvam*—universal; *anantam*—unlimited; *ādyam*—[and] primeval; *rūpaṁ*—form; *me*—of Mine; *darśitam*—has been shown; *tava*—to you; *ātma-yogāt*—through My intrinsic potency; *yaṁ*—which [universal form]; *na dṛṣṭa-pūrvam*—has not been seen before [by anyone]; *tvad anyena*—other than you.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Arjuna, being pleased with you, I showed you through My intrinsic potency (ātma-yoga), this supreme form, which is resplendent, universal, unlimited, and primeval. It has not been seen before by anyone other than you. (11.47)

na veda-yajñādhyayanair na dānair
na ca kriyābhir na tapobhir ugraiḥ
evam-rūpaḥ śakya ahaṁ nṛ-loke
draṣṭuṁ tvad anyena kuru-pravīra

kuru-pravīra—O great hero among the Kurus; *nṛ-loke*—in this mortal world; *ahaṁ*—I; *na śakyaḥ*—cannot be; *draṣṭuṁ*—seen; *evam-rūpaḥ*—in this form; *tvad anyena*—[by anyone] other than you; *veda*—[whether] by reciting the Vedas; *yajña*—by performance of sacrifice; *adhyayanaiḥ*—[or] by study of scriptures; *na*—not; *dānaiḥ*—by charity; *na*—not; *kriyābhiḥ*—by ritualistic activities; *na ca*—and not; *ugraiḥ*—by severe; *tapobhiḥ*—austerities.

O great hero among the Kurus, in this mortal world I cannot be seen in this form by anyone other than you, whether through reciting the Vedas, performance of sacrifice, study of scriptures, charity, ritualistic activities, or severe austerities. (11.48)

*mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍha-bhāvo
dṛṣṭvā rūpaṁ ghoram īdṛk mamedam
vyapeta-bhīḥ prīta-manāḥ punas tvam
tad eva me rūpaṁ idam prapaśya*

mā — do not [let there be]; *vyathā* — perturbation; *te* — to you; *ca* — and; *mā* — do not [let there be]; *vimūḍha-bhāvaḥ* — delusion; *dṛṣṭvā* — by seeing; *idam* — this; *īdṛk* — such; *ghoram* — a terrible; *rūpaṁ* — form; *mama* — of Mine; *prīta-manāḥ* — with a cheerful mind; *vyapeta-bhīḥ* — free from fear; *tvam* — you; *prapaśya* — behold; *punaḥ* — again; *idam* — this; *tad eva* — that very; *rūpaṁ* — [human] form; *me* — of Mine.

Do not be perturbed or deluded by seeing this terrible form of Mine. With a cheerful mind, free from fear, behold once again that very [human] form of Mine. (11.49)

*sañjaya uvāca
ity arjunaṁ vāsudevas tathoktvā
svakaṁ rūpaṁ darśayāmāsa bhūyaḥ
āśvāsayāmāsa ca bhītam enaṁ
bhūtvā punaḥ saumya-vapur mahātmā*

sañjayaḥ uvāca — Sañjaya said; *uktvā* — speaking; *iti* — thus; *arjunaṁ* — to Arjuna; *vāsudevaḥ* — Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *bhūyaḥ* — again; *darśayām āsa* — showed; *tathā* — in that way; *svakam* — His own; *rūpaṁ* — [human] form; *bhūtvā* — assuming; *saumya* —

[His] gentle; *vapuḥ*—form; *punaḥ ca*—once again [i.e., as before]; *mahā-ātmā*—the great Self; *āśvāsayām āsa*—consoled; *enam*—him [Arjuna]; *bhītam*—[who was] fearful.

Saṅjaya said: Speaking in this way to Arjuna, Śrī Kṛṣṇa again showed His own human form. Assuming His gentle form as before, the Mahātmā (the great Self) consoled Arjuna who was full of fear. (11.50)

arjuna uvāca

*dṛṣṭvedaṁ mānuṣaṁ rūpaṁ tava saumyaṁ janārdana
idānīm asmi saṁvṛttaḥ sa-cetāḥ prakṛtiṁ gataḥ*

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *janārdana*—O Janārdana; *dṛṣṭvā*—seeing; *idaṁ*—this; *saumyaṁ*—gentle; *mānuṣam*—human; *rūpaṁ*—form; *tava*—of Yours; *asmi*—I am; *idānīm*—now; *saṁvṛttaḥ*—self-composed; *sa-cetāḥ*—at heart; *gataḥ*—having regained; *prakṛtiṁ*—[my] normal state.

Arjuna said: O Janārdana, seeing this gentle human form of Yours, I have now become self-composed at heart and have regained my normal state. (11.51)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*su-durdarśam idaṁ rūpaṁ dṛṣṭavān asi yaṁ mama
devā apy asya rūpasya nityaṁ darśana-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *idaṁ*—this; *rūpaṁ*—form; *mama*—of Mine; *yat*—which; *dṛṣṭavān asi*—you have seen; *su-durdarśam*—[is] extremely difficult to behold; *devāḥ api*—even the *devas*; *nityam*—always; *darśana-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ*—are eager to catch sight; *asya rūpasya*—of this form.

Śrī Bhagavān said: This form of Mine which you have seen is extremely difficult to behold. Even the *devas* are always eager to catch sight of this form. (11.52)

*nāham vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejyayā
śakya evaṁ-vidho draṣṭuṁ dr̥ṣṭavān asi mām yathā*

na — not; *vedaiḥ* — by study of the Vedas; *na* — nor; *tapasā* — by austerities; *na* — nor; *dānena* — by charity; *na* — nor; *ca* — also; *ijyayā* — by *yajña*; *śakyaḥ* — is it possible; *aham* — for Me; *draṣṭuṁ* — to be seen; *evaṁ-vidhaḥ* — in this manner; *yathā* — as; *dr̥ṣṭavān asi* — you have seen; *mām* — Me.

Not by study of the Vedas, nor by austerities, nor by charity, nor by *yajñas*, can I be seen in this manner, in the form that you have seen Me. (11.53)

*bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evaṁ-vidho 'rjuna
jñātuṁ draṣṭuṁ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṁ ca parantapa*

arjuna — O Arjuna; *param-tapa* — O scorcher of enemies; *ananyayā* — by exclusive; *bhaktyā* — devotion; *tu* — however; *śakyaḥ* — it is possible; *aham* — for Me; *jñātuṁ* — to be known; *ca* — and; *draṣṭuṁ* — to be seen; *ca* — and; *praveṣṭuṁ* — to be entered into; *tattvena* — in truth; *evaṁ-vidhaḥ* — in this manner.

O Arjuna, O scorcher of enemies, by exclusive devotion, however, I can be known, realized, and entered into² in truth in this very form. (11.54)

*mat-karma-kṛn mat-paramo mad-bhaktah saṅga-varjitah
nirvairah sarva-bhūteṣu yah sa mām eti pāṇḍava*

pāṇḍava — O son of Pāṇḍu; *yaḥ* — one who; *mat-karma-kṛt* — is engaged in action for My sake; *mat-paramaḥ* — who considers Me as the Supreme goal; *mat-bhaktaḥ* — who is devoted to Me; *saṅga-varjitaḥ* — who is without attachment; *nirvairaḥ* — [and] devoid of enmity; *sarva-bhūteṣu* — toward all living beings; *saḥ* — he; *eti* — attains; *mām* — Me.

O son of Pāṇḍu, one who is engaged in action for My sake, who considers Me as the supreme goal, who is devoted to Me, without attachment, and devoid of enmity toward all living beings — such a person attains Me. (11.55)



-
1. A person who can use both hands equally dexterously.
 2. The verb *praveṣṭum*, “to enter into,” does not mean merging into Kṛṣṇa, but entering into His abode.

CHAPTER 12

THE PATH OF DEVOTION

BHAKTI-YOGA

In earlier chapters (5, 6, and 8), Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa elaborated on the worship of the Absolute as devoid of all material form and attributes. He then laid emphasis on the importance of the worship of the very same Absolute as the Supreme God, who is endowed with unlimited transcendental form and attributes, by the repeated use of the pronouns *aham* (I) and *mām* (Me). Finally, in Chapter 11, He glorified exclusive devotion and its rewards.

In the present chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the principles of *bhakti*. It consists of 20 verses, one spoken by Arjuna and the rest by Kṛṣṇa. Having understood Kṛṣṇa's glories, Arjuna asks Him, "Between those devotees who are always devoted in this manner and who exclusively worship You, and those who worship the unmanifest imperishable Brahman, who are the topmost realizers of *yoga*?" (1)

Kṛṣṇa replies, "Those whose minds are absorbed in Me, who are ever united with Me, and who worship Me, being endowed with transcendental faith, I regard as the topmost realizers of *yoga*." The other practitioners will ultimately also attain Him alone, but their path is exceedingly difficult, because it is very hard to fix the mind on the unmanifest Brahman. Kṛṣṇa further states, "The misery of those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest is greater, because the goal of the unmanifest is attained with difficulty by embodied beings" (2–5).

Kṛṣṇa personally delivers those who worship Him, uplifting them from the ocean of death. He, therefore, recommends becoming absorbed in Him (6–7). For those who are unable to do so, He advises regulated practice to fix the mind on Him. If, however, one is incapable even of that, one should simply act for Him. One who is unable to do so should renounce the fruits of all his actions. Kṛṣṇa thus offers alternative practices in accordance with the capacity and eligibility of different practitioners (9–12).

In the final verses of this chapter, Kṛṣṇa speaks about the qualities of His dear devotees, confirming repeatedly that they are very dear to Him (13–19). He concludes by saying, “Moreover, those devotees who devoutly adhere to this immortal wisdom path as described by Me, who are endowed with faith and intent exclusively on Me, are extremely dear to Me” (20).

arjuna uvāca

*evam satata-yuktā ye bhaktās tvām paryupāsate
ye cāpy akṣaram avyaktam teṣāṁ ke yoga-vittamāḥ*

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna inquired; *ye*—[between] those; *bhaktāḥ*—devotees; *satata-yuktāḥ*—who are always devoted; *evam*—in this manner; *paryupāsate*—[and] who exclusively worship; *tvām*—You; *ca*—and; *ye*—those; *api*—also; [who worship]; *avyaktam*—the unmanifest; *akṣaram*—imperishable [Brahman]; *ke*—who; *teṣāṁ*—among them; *yoga-vit-tamāḥ*—are the topmost realizers of *yoga*.

Arjuna inquired: Between those devotees who are always devoted in this manner and who exclusively worship You, and those who worship the unmanifest imperishable Brahman, who are the topmost realizers of *yoga*? (12.1)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*mayy āveśya mano ye mām nitya-yuktā upāsate
śraddhayā parayopetās te me yuktatamā matāḥ*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān replied; *ye*—those; *manaḥ*—whose minds; *āveśya*—are absorbed; *mayi*—in Me; *nitya*—who are ever; *yuktāḥ*—united [with Me]; *upāsate*—[and] who worship; *mām*—Me; *upetāḥ*—being endowed; *parayā śraddhayā*—with transcendental faith; *te*—they; *me matāḥ*—in My opinion; *yukta-tamāḥ*—are the topmost realizers of *yoga*.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Those whose minds are absorbed in Me, who are ever united with Me, and who worship Me, being endowed with transcendental faith, I regard as the topmost realizers of *yoga*. (12.2)

*ye tv akṣaram anirdeśyam avyaktaṁ paryupāsate
sarvatra-gam acintyaṁ ca kūṭa-stham acalaṁ dhruvam
sanniyamyendriya-grāmaṁ sarvatra sama-buddhayaḥ
te prāpnuvanti mām eva sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ*

tu — but; *ye* — those who; *sanniyamya* — having regulated; *indriya-grāmaṁ* — all their senses; *sama-buddhayaḥ* — who are equally disposed; *sarvatra* — toward all living beings; *ratāḥ* — who are engaged; *sarva-bhūta-hite* — in the welfare of all beings; *paryupāsate* — [and] who worship; *anirdeśyam* — the inexpressible; *avyaktaṁ* — unmanifest; *sarvatra-gam* — all-pervading; *acintyaṁ* — inconceivable; *kūṭa-stham* — immutable; *acalaṁ* — immovable; *dhruvam* — eternal; *ca* — and; *akṣaram* — imperishable [Brahman]; *te* — they; *prāpnuvanti* — attain; *mām* — Me; *eva* — indeed.

But those who have regulated their senses, who are equally disposed toward all living beings, who are engaged in the welfare of all beings, and who worship the inexpressible, unmanifest, all-pervading, inconceivable, immutable, immovable, eternal, and imperishable Brahman—they also attain Me. (12.3–4)

*kleśo 'dhikataras teṣāṁ avyaktāsakta-cetasām
avyaktā hi gatiḥ duḥkhaṁ dehavadbhir avāpyate*

kleśaḥ — the misery; *teṣāṁ* — of those; *cetasām* — whose minds; *āsakta* — are attached; *avyakta* — to the unmanifest; *adhikataras* — is greater; *hi* — because; *gatiḥ* — the goal; *avyaktā* — of the unmanifest; *avāpyate* — is attained; *duḥkham* — [with] difficulty; *deha-vadbhiḥ* — by embodied beings.

The misery of those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest is greater, because the goal of the unmanifest is

attained with difficulty by embodied beings. (12.5)

*ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi sannyasya mat-parāḥ
ananyenaiva yogena mām dhyāyanta upāsate
teṣām ahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt
bhavāmi na cirāt pārtha mayy āveśita-cetasām*

tu—but; *ye*—those who; *sannyasya*—having dedicated; *sarvāṇi*—all; *karmāṇi*—actions; *mayi*—to Me; *mat-parāḥ*—who are attached to Me; *upāsate*—[and] who worship; *mām*—Me; *dhyāyantaḥ*—meditating [on Me]; *ananyena yogena*—through the *yoga* of exclusive devotion; *eva*—alone; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *teṣām*—for them; *cetasām*—whose minds; *āveśita*—are absorbed; *mayi*—in Me; *aham*—I; *na cirāt*—quickly; *bhavāmi*—become; *samuddhartā*—the uplifter; *sāgarāt*—from the ocean; *mṛtyu*—of deathly; *saṁsāra*—material existence.

But those who have dedicated all actions to Me, who are attached to Me, and who worship Me, meditating on Me through the *yoga* of exclusive devotion alone—O Pārtha, I quickly uplift such individuals, whose minds are absorbed in Me, from the ocean of deathly material existence. (12.6–7)

*mayy eva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhim niveśaya
nivasīṣyasi mayy eva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ*

ādhatsva—fix; *manaḥ*—[your] mind; *mayi eva*—exclusively on Me; *buddhim*—[and let your] intelligence; *niveśaya*—be absorbed; *mayi*—in Me; *ataḥ ūrdhvaṁ*—thereafter; *nivasīṣyasi*—you will live; *mayi eva*—in Me alone; *na saṁśayaḥ*—there is no doubt [about this].

Fix your mind exclusively on Me, and let your intelligence be absorbed in Me. Thereafter, you will live only in Me. There is no doubt about this. (12.8)

*atha cittam samādhātum
na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram
abhyāsa-yogena tato
mām icchāptum dhanañjaya*

atha—if; *na śaknoṣi*—you are not able; *samādhātum*—to fix; *cittam*—[your] mind; *sthiram*—steadily; *mayi*—on Me; *ghanam-jaya*—O Arjuna; *tataḥ*—then; *icchā*—aspire; *āptum*—to attain; *mām*—Me; *abhyāsa-yogena*—by repeated practice.

But if you cannot fix your mind steadily on Me, O Dhanañjaya, then seek to attain Me by repeated practice. (12.9)

*abhyāse 'py asamarthaḥ 'si mat-karma-paramo bhava
mad-artham api karmāṇi kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi*

[if, however]; *asi*—you are; *asamarthaḥ*—unable; *abhyāse api*—even to practice; [then]; *bhava*—become; *paramaḥ*—intent; *mat-karma*—on working for Me; *api*—even; *kurvan*—by engagement; *karmāṇi*—in actions; *mat-artham*—for My sake; *avāpsyasi*—you will attain; *siddhim*—perfection.

If, however, you are unable even to practice steadily in this manner, then be devoted to working for Me. Even by engagement in actions for My sake, you will attain perfection. (12.10)

*athaitad apy aśakto 'si kartum mad-yogam āśritaḥ
sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ tataḥ kuru yatātmavān*

atha — but [if]; *asi* — you are; *aśaktaḥ* — unable; *kartum* — to do; *etat api* — even this; *tataḥ* — then; *āśritaḥ* — taking shelter; *mat* — of My; *yogam* — yoga; *yata ātmavān* — [and] being self-controlled; *kuru* — be engaged; *tyāgam* — in renouncing; *phala* — the results; *sarva-karma* — of all actions [to Me].

But if you cannot do even this, then taking shelter of My yoga and being self-controlled, offer the fruits of all your actions to Me. (12.11)

*śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj jñānād dhyānam viśiṣyate
dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgas tyāgāc chāntir anantaram*

jñānam — mindfulness [of Me]; *śreyaḥ hi* — [is] certainly better; *abhyāsāt* — than practice [devoid of such awareness]; *dhyānam* — [and] meditation; *viśiṣyate* — is better; *jñānāt* — than mindfulness; [because]; *dhyānāt* — through meditation; *karma-phala-tyāgaḥ* — renunciation of the fruits of action [occurs automatically]; *anantaram* — [and] thereafter; *tyāgāt* — by renunciation of the desire for fruits; *śāntiḥ* — [one attains] peace.

Mindfulness of Me is certainly better than practice [devoid of such awareness], and meditation is better than mindfulness, because through meditation, renunciation of the fruits of action occurs automatically, and thereafter by renunciation of the desire for fruits one attains peace. (12.12)

*adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānāṁ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣamī*

*santuṣṭaḥ satatam yogī yatātmā dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ*

mat-bhaktaḥ — My devotee; *yaḥ* — who [is]; *adveṣṭā* — devoid of enmity; *sarva-bhūtānām* — toward all living beings; *maitraḥ* — friendly; *ca* — and; *eva* — indeed; *karuṇaḥ* — compassionate; *nirmamaḥ* — devoid of the notion of “mine;” *nirahaṅkāraḥ* — devoid of the notion of the conditional “I;” *sama* — equipoised; *duḥkha* — [in] sorrow; *sukhaḥ* — [and] happiness; *kṣamī* — forgiving; *santuṣṭaḥ* — content; *satatam* — always; *yogī* — engaged in the *yoga* of devotion; *yata-ātmā* — self-regulated; *dṛḍha-niścayaḥ* — firmly resolved; *manaḥ* — [and] whose mind; *buddhiḥ* — [and] intellect; *arpita* — are consecrated; *mayi* — unto Me; *saḥ* — he; *priyaḥ* — [is] dear; *me* — to Me.

My devotee, who is devoid of enmity toward all living beings, who is friendly, compassionate, devoid of the notions of “I” and “mine,” equipoised in sorrow and happiness; who is forgiving, content, ever engaged in the *yoga* of devotion, self-regulated, firmly resolved, and whose mind and intellect are consecrated unto Me, is dear to Me. (12.13–14)

*yasmān nodvijate loko lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ
harṣāmarṣa-bhayodvegair mukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ*

yasmāt — a person from whom; *lokaḥ* — people; *na udvijate* — do not experience aggrievement; *ca* — and; *yaḥ* — who; *na udvijate* — is not aggrieved; *lokāt* — by people; *yaḥ* — [and] who [is]; *muktaḥ* — free; *harṣa* — [from] delight; *amarṣa* — anger; *bhaya* — fear; *udvegaiḥ* — [and] anxiety; *saḥ* — he; *ca* — also; *priyaḥ* — [is] dear; *me* — to Me.

A person who does not cause aggrievement to anyone, who is not aggrieved by others, and who is free from delight, anger,

fear, and anxiety — such a person is also dear to Me. (12.15)

*anapekṣaḥ śucir dakṣa udāsīno gata-vyathaḥ
sarvārambha-parityāgī yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ*

mat-bhaktaḥ — My devotee; *yaḥ* — who [is]; *anapekṣaḥ* — free from desire; *śuciḥ* — pure; *dakṣaḥ* — proficient; *udāsīnaḥ* — impartial; *gata-vyathaḥ* — undisturbed; *parityāgī* — [and] a renouncer; *sarva-ārambha* — [of] all undertakings; *saḥ* — he; *priyaḥ* — [is] dear; *me* — to Me.

My devotee who is free from desire, who is pure both internally and externally, proficient, impartial, undisturbed, and who gives up all undertakings [antagonistic to devotion], is dear to Me. (12.16)

*yo na hr̥ṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati
śubhāśubha-parityāgī bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyaḥ*

yaḥ — one who; *na hr̥ṣyati* — neither rejoices [in the pleasant]; *na dveṣṭi* — nor detests [the unpleasant]; *na śocati* — who neither grieves; *na kāṅkṣati* — nor hankers; *parityāgī* — who is a renouncer; *śubha* — [of] meritorious; *aśubha* — [and] unmeritorious actions [devoid of devotion]; *yaḥ* — [and] who; *bhakti-mān* — [is] endowed with devotion; *saḥ* — he; *priyaḥ* — [is] dear; *me* — to Me.

A person who neither rejoices in the pleasant nor detests the unpleasant, who neither grieves nor hankers, who abandons all meritorious and unmeritorious actions [devoid of devotion], and who is endowed with devotion, is dear to Me. (12.17)

*samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca tathā mānāpamānayoḥ
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu samaḥ saṅga-vivarjitaḥ
tulya-nindā-stutir maunī santuṣṭo yena kenacit
aniketaḥ sthira-matir bhaktimān me priyo naraḥ*

samaḥ—[one who is] equally disposed; *śatrau ca*—to an enemy; *mitre ca*—and to a friend; *tathā*—as well as; *māna*—[toward] honor; *apamānayoḥ*—[and] dishonor; *samaḥ*—[who is] even-minded; *śīta*—[in] cold; *uṣṇa*—[and] heat; *sukha*—[and in] happiness; *duḥkheṣu*—[and] misery; *saṅga-vivarjitaḥ*—who is free from attachment; *tulya*—[who is] equal; *nindā*—[in] reproach; *stutiḥ*—[and] praise; *maunī*—contemplative; *santuṣṭaḥ*—content; *yena kenacit*—by whatever means; *aniketaḥ*—devoid of attachment to any dwelling place; *sthira matiḥ*—[and] of steady mind; *naraḥ*—such a person; *bhaktimān*—who is endowed with devotion; *priyaḥ*—[is] dear; *me*—to Me.

One who regards alike both an enemy and a friend, as well as honor and dishonor, who is equal in heat and cold, and in happiness and misery, who is free from attachment, equal toward praise and reproach, contemplative, content with whatever comes of its own accord, devoid of the sense of ownership over any dwelling place, and of steady mind, such a person, who is endowed with devotion, is dear to Me. (12.18–19)

*ye tu dharmāmṛtam idaṁ yathoktaṁ paryupāsate
śraddadhānā mat-paramā bhaktās te 'tīva me priyāḥ*

tu—moreover; *ye*—those who; *paryupāsate*—devoutly adhere; *idaṁ*—to this; *amṛtam*—immortal; *dharmā*—wisdom path; *yathā*—as; *uktaṁ*—described [by Me]; *te*—such; *bhaktāḥ*—devotees; *śraddadhānāḥ*—who are endowed with faith; *mat-*

paramāḥ—[and] intent exclusively on Me; *atīva*—[are] extremely; *priyāḥ*—dear; *me*—to Me.

Moreover, those devotees who devoutly adhere to this immortal wisdom path as described by Me, who are endowed with faith and intent exclusively on Me, are extremely dear to Me. (12.20)



CHAPTER 13

THE PATH OF DISCERNMENT BETWEEN NATURE AND ITS KNOWER

PRAKṚTI-PURUṢA-VIBHĀGA-YOGA

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa began His teachings by explaining the distinction between the body and the self. In Chapter 2, the emphasis was on the description of the *ātman*, the individual self, who is the subsidiary knower of the body and the world, known as the *kṣetrajāña* (literally, “the knower of the field”). In this chapter, the emphasis is on the enumeration of the nature and functions of the Supreme Immanent Self, Paramātmā, who is the primary *kṣetrajāña*.

In the previous chapter, Kṛṣṇa stated that the goal of those who worship the imperishable, unmanifest Brahman is more difficult to attain than that pursued by His devotees who worship only Him (12.5). This arduous path is that of *jñāna-yoga*. In Chapter 13, the first of the third set of six chapters, Kṛṣṇa describes *jñāna-yoga* in detail. There are thirty-four verses in this chapter, all spoken by Kṛṣṇa. *Jñāna* (knowledge) here specifically means knowledge of oneself as a conscious being, distinct from the body and bodily extensions. Kṛṣṇa builds on this knowledge by explaining the characteristics of matter, which constitutes the body.

First Śrī Kṛṣṇa focuses on the topic of discrimination between *kṣetra* (the body) and *kṣetrajāña* (the inner self). There are two types of *kṣetrajāña*—the individual self and Paramātmā (2). That which undergoes modifications is the *kṣetra*, the body (3).

Kṛṣṇa then describes sequentially this *kṣetra* (5–6), *jñāna* (7–11), and *jñeya*, or the knowable (12–18).

Both *prakṛti* (material nature) and *puruṣa* (the individual self), as well as their conjunction, are without beginning (19). The individuated *puruṣa* experiences happiness and distress while trying to enjoy material nature by associating with *prakṛti* and its modifications. This association with the *guṇas* of *prakṛti* is the cause of the *puruṣa*'s various types of births (21). Paramātmā, or the Supreme Immanent Self, is the witness, the maintainer, and the regulator within the body and is the superior *puruṣa*. One who knows *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* along with its *guṇas* becomes liberated (23).

Whatever is born, regardless of whether it is mobile or immobile, is a combination of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña* (26). Kṛṣṇa then explains the presence of Paramātmā in everything. One who sees Him in this way and renounces the ego of doership of actions, which are actually accomplished by *prakṛti*, attains the Supreme Brahman (27–30). Kṛṣṇa then describes the characteristics of Paramātmā (31–33). Those who know the distinction between *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña* become liberated (34).

arjuna uvāca

*prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva kṣetraṁ kṣetra-jñam eva ca
etat veditum icchāmi jñānaṁ jñeyam ca keśava*

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *keśava*—O Kṛṣṇa; *icchāmi*—I wish; *veditum*—to know; *etat*—all this; *prakṛtim*—about material nature; *ca eva*—and also; *puruṣam*—about the individual conscious living being; *kṣetram*—about the presentational field; *eva ca*—and indeed; *kṣetra-jñam*—about the knower of the field; *jñānam*—about knowledge; *ca*—and; *jñeyam*—the knowable.

Arjuna said: O Keśava, I wish to know about material nature (*prakṛti*) and the individual conscious living being (*puruṣa*), about the presentational field (*kṣetra*) and the knower of the field (*kṣetrajña*), as well as about knowledge (*jñāna*) and the knowable (*jñeya*). (13.0)¹

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetram ity abhidhīyate
etat yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetra-jña iti tad-vidaḥ*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *idaṁ*—this; *śarīram*—body; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *abhidhīyate*—is called; *kṣetram iti*—“the field;” *yaḥ*—[and] the one who; *vetti*—knows; *etat*—it; *taṁ*—he; *prāhuḥ*—is called; *kṣetra-jñaḥ iti*—“the knower of the field;” *tad-vidaḥ*—by those who have directly intuited both the field and its knower.

Śrī Bhagavān said: This body, O son of Kuntī, is called the field (*kṣetra*), and the one who knows it is called the knower of the field (*kṣetrajña*) by those who have directly intuited both the field and its knower. (13.1)

*kṣetra-jñāṁ cāpi mām viddhi sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata
kṣetra-kṣetra-jñayor jñānaṁ yat taj jñānaṁ mataṁ mama*

bhārata — O descendant of Bharata; *viddhi* — know; *mām* — Me; *ca* — also; *kṣetra-jñāṁ* — as the knower of the field; *sarva-kṣetreṣu* — in all bodies; *api* — whatsoever; *mama* — [in] My; *matam* — opinion; *jñānam* — that knowledge; *yat* — which; *kṣetra* — [relates to] the field [the body]; *kṣetra-jñayoḥ* — [and to both] the knowers of the field; *tat* — that; *jñānam* — [is true] knowledge.

O descendant of the Bharata dynasty, know Me also as the *kṣetrajña* situated within all *kṣetras* whatsoever [in addition to the individuated knowers]. In My view, knowledge of the field [the body] and [both these] knowers of the field [the individual living being and the omniscient Lord] is what is meant by [true] knowledge (*jñāna*). (13.2)

*tat kṣetram yac ca yādṛk ca yad-vikāri yataś ca yat
sa ca yo yat-prabhāvaś ca tat samāsenā me śṛṇu*

yat ca — what; *tat kṣetram* — [is] the field; *yādṛk ca* — what are its fundamental characteristics [lit., “of what type is it”]; *yat-vikāri* — what are its modifications; *yataḥ* — from what [has it arisen]; *ca* — and; *yat* — what [is its distinct nature in different life forms]; *ca* — as well as; *yaḥ* — who; *saḥ* — [is] he [the knower of the field]; *yat-prabhāvaḥ* — [and] what are his intrinsic powers; *śṛṇu* — please hear; *tat* — [all] that; *me* — from Me; *samāsenā* — in brief.

What is the field (*kṣetra*), what are its fundamental characteristics, what are its modifications, from what has it arisen, and what is its distinct nature? Additionally, who is

the knower of the field [kṣetrajña] and what are his intrinsic powers? Please hear all of this from Me in brief. (13.3)

*ṛṣibhir bahudhā gītaṁ chandobhir vividhaiḥ prthak
brahma-sūtra-padais caiva hetumadbhir viniścitaiḥ*

[this truth regarding the field and its knower]; *gītaṁ*—has been sung; *ṛṣibhiḥ*—by the sages; *bahudhā*—in many ways; *prthak*—[it has been described] separately; *vividhaiḥ*—by the various; *chandobhiḥ*—Vedic hymns; *ca*—and [set forth]; *hetumadbhiḥ*—by the logical; *viniścitaiḥ*—[and] conclusive; *padaiḥ*—words; *brahma-sūtra*—of the *Brahma Sūtra*; *eva*—indeed.

This [truth regarding the field and its knower] has been sung by the sages in many ways. It has also been separately described by the various Vedic hymns and set forth by the logical and conclusive words of the *Brahma Sūtras*. (13.4)

*mahā-bhūtāny ahaṅkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca
indriyāṇi daśaikam ca pañca cendriya-gocarāḥ
icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ saṅghātaś cetanā dhṛtiḥ
etat kṣetraṁ samāsenā sa-vikāram udāhṛtam*

mahā-bhūtāni—the [five] great elements; *ahaṅkāraḥ*—the conditional I-sense; *buddhiḥ*—the intellect; *eva ca*—and indeed; *avyaktam*—the unmanifest [*prakṛti*]; *ca*—and; *indriyāṇi daśa-ekam*—the ten sense faculties and the mind; *ca*—and; *pañca*—the five; *indriya-go-carāḥ*—objects of the senses; *icchā*—desire; *dveṣaḥ*—aversion; *sukhaṁ*—happiness; *duḥkhaṁ*—distress; *saṅghātaḥ*—the aggregate [i.e., the body]; *cetanā*—awareness; *dhṛtiḥ*—[and] fortitude; *etat*—[all] this; *udāhṛtam*—is described; *samāsenā*—in brief; *kṣetram*—as the field; *sa-vikāram*—along with its modifications.

The five great elements, the conditional I-sense, the intellect, the unmanifest [*prakṛti*], the ten sense faculties and the mind, the five sense objects, desire, aversion, happiness, distress, the aggregate [of the elements, called the body], awareness, and fortitude — all this is described in brief as the field of action along with its modifications. (13.5–6)

*amānitvam adambhitvam ahimsā kṣāntir ārjavam
ācāryopāśanam śaucam sthairyam ātma-vinigrahaḥ
indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam anahaṅkāra eva ca
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam
asaktir anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putra-dāra-grhādiṣu
nityam ca sama-cittatvam iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu
mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī
vivikta-deśa-sevitvam aratir jana-saṁsadi
adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvam tattva-jñānārtha-darśanam
etaj jñānam iti proktam ajñānam yad ato 'nyathā*

amānitvam — humility; *adambhitvam* — freedom from deceit; *ahimsā* — non-violence; *kṣāntiḥ* — forbearance; *ārjavam* — simplicity; *ācārya-upāśanam* — service to an authentic teacher; *śaucam* — purity; *sthairyam* — steadiness; *ātma-vinigrahaḥ* — restraint of the body; *vairāgyam* — dispassion; *indriya-artheṣu* — in regard to the sense objects; *eva ca* — and indeed; *anahaṅkāraḥ* — disidentification with the conditional I-sense; *anudarśanam* — contemplation; *duḥkha-doṣa* — [of] the miserable defects; *janma* — [of] birth; *mṛtyu* — death; *jarā* — old age; *vyādhi* — [and] disease; *asaktiḥ* — detachment from; *anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ* — [and] disidentification with; *putra* — children; *dāra* — wife; *grha-ādiṣu* — home, and so on; *ca* — and; *nityam* — constant; *sama-cittatvam* — even-mindedness; *iṣṭa* — [in] favorable; *aniṣṭa* — [and] unfavorable; *upapattiṣu* — circumstances; *ca* — and; *avyabhicāriṇī* — undeviating; *bhaktiḥ*

—pure devotion; *mayi*—unto Me; *ananya-yogena*—with exclusive absorption; *sevitvam*—residence; *vivikta*—[in] a secluded; *deśa*—place; *aratiḥ*—non-attachment; *jana-saṁsadi*—to the association of worldly people; *nityatvam*—constancy; *jñāna*—in the culture of knowledge; *adhyātma*—pertaining to the Self; *artha-darśanam*—[and] deliberation on the goal; *tattva-jñāna*—[of] knowledge regarding the Absolute; *iti etat*—[all] this; *proktam*—is declared; *jñānam*—to be knowledge; *yat*—whatever; *anyathā*—[is] different; *ataḥ*—from this; *ajñānam*—[is] ignorance.

Humility, freedom from deceit, non-violence, forbearance, simplicity, service to an authentic teacher, purity [internal and external], steadiness, restraint of the body, dispassion for sense objects, disidentification with the conditional I-sense, contemplation of the miserable defects of birth, death, old age, and disease, detachment from and disidentification with children, wife, home, and so on, constant even-mindedness in favorable and unfavorable circumstances, undeviating pure devotion unto Me with exclusive absorption, residence in a secluded place, non-attachment to the association of worldly people, constancy in the culture of knowledge pertaining to the Self, and deliberation on the goal of knowledge regarding the Absolute—all this is declared to be knowledge. Whatever is different from this is ignorance. (13.7–11)

*jñeyam yat tat pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvāmṛtam aśnute
anādi mat-param brahma na sat tan nāsad ucyate*

pravakṣyāmi—I shall now describe; *tat*—that; *yat*—which [is]; *jñeyam*—the object of knowledge [i.e., the knowable]; *jñātvā*—knowing; *yat*—which; *aśnute*—one attains; *amṛtam*—

immortality; *tat* — that; *brahma* — Brahman; *anādi* — [which is] beginningless; *mat-param* — [and] subordinate to Me; *ucyate* — is described; *na sat* — neither as the cause; *na asat* — nor as the effect.

I shall now describe the object of knowledge (*jñeya*), knowing which, one attains immortality. That Brahman, which is beginningless and subordinate to Me cannot be described either as the cause or as the effect. (13.12)

*sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam tat sarvato 'kṣi-śiro-mukham
sarvataḥ śrutimal loke sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati*

tat — It [Brahman]; *pāṇi* — [with] hands; *pādam* — [and] feet; *sarvataḥ* — everywhere; *akṣi* — [with] eyes; *śiraḥ* — heads; *mukham* — [and] faces; *sarvataḥ* — all around; *śruti-mat* — [and] with ears; *sarvataḥ* — in all directions; *tiṣṭhati* — exists; *āvṛtya* — pervading; *sarvam* — everything; *loke* — in the world.

It [Brahman], with hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads, and faces all around, and with ears in all directions, exists, pervading everything in the world. (13.13)

*sarvendriya-guṇābhāsam sarvendriya-vivarjitam
asaktam sarva-bhṛc caiva nirguṇam guṇa-bhoktr ca*

ābhāsam — [Brahman] illuminates; *sarva* — all; *indriya* — the sense faculties; *guṇa* — [and] their qualitative objects; *vivarjitam* — [yet It is] bereft of; *sarva* — all; *indriya* — senses; *asaktam* — [It is] unattached; *ca eva* — and yet; *sarva-bhṛt* — the sustainer of everything; *nirguṇam* — [It is] devoid of [material] qualities; *ca* — and [yet]; *guṇa-bhoktr* — the master of [transcendental] qualities.

Brahman illuminates all the sense faculties and their qualitative objects, and yet It is bereft of all [material] senses. It is unattached, and yet the sustainer of everything; It is devoid of [material] qualities, and yet is the master of [transcendental] qualities. (13.14)

*bahir antaś ca bhūtānām acaram caram eva ca
sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyam dūra-stham cāntike ca tat*

tat—It [Brahman]; *antaḥ*—[is] interior to; *ca*—and; *bahiḥ*—outside; *bhūtānām*—of all living beings; *caram*—[It is] moving; *eva ca*—and indeed; *acaram*—unmoving; *sūkṣmatvāt*—because of being subtle; *tat*—It [Brahman]; *avijñeyam*—[is] incomprehensible; *dūra-stham ca*—and although far away; *antike*—[It is] near; *ca*—also.

Brahman is both interior to and outside of all living beings. It is moving and also non-moving. Being subtle, It is incomprehensible. Although far away, It is also very near. (13.15)

*avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam
bhūta-bharṭṛ ca taj jñeyam grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca*

tat—It [Brahman]; *avibhaktam ca*—[is] without any divisions; *ca*—and [yet]; *sthitam*—[It] exists; *vibhaktam iva*—as if divided; *bhūteṣu*—in all beings; *jñeyam*—[It is] to be understood; *bhūta-bharṭṛ*—as the sustainer of all beings; *ca*—and; *grasiṣṇu*—as the destroyer; *ca*—as well as; *prabhaviṣṇu*—the originator.

It is without any divisions, and yet It exists as if divided in all beings. It is to be understood as the sustainer, the destroyer, as well as the originator of all beings. (13.16)

*jyotiṣām api taj jyotis tamasaḥ param ucyate
jñānam jñeyam jñāna-gamyam hr̥di sarvasya viṣṭhitam*

tat—It [Brahman]; *jyotiḥ*—[is] the light; *jyotiṣām*—of all luminous objects; *api*—whatsoever; *ucyate*—[and] is said; *param*—to be beyond; *tamasaḥ*—darkness [i.e., ignorance]; *jñānam*—[It is] knowledge; *jñeyam*—the knowable; *jñāna-gamyam*—[and] is capable of being directly intuited through enlightened awareness; *viṣṭhitam*—[It] is situated; *hr̥di*—in the heart; *sarvasya*—of all beings.

It is the light of all luminous objects whatsoever and is said to be beyond darkness [ignorance]. It is knowledge, the knowable, and capable of being directly intuited through enlightened awareness. It is situated in the hearts of all beings. (13.17)

*iti kṣetram tathā jñānam jñeyam cuktam samāsataḥ
mad-bhakta etad vijñāya mad-bhāvāyopapadyate*

iti—thus; *kṣetram*—the field [the body]; *tathā*—and; *jñānam*—knowledge; *ca*—and; *jñeyam*—the knowable; *uktam*—have been described; *samāsataḥ*—in brief; *vijñāya*—knowing; *etat*—this; *mat-bhaktaḥ*—My devotee; *upapadyate*—becomes eligible to attain; *mat-bhāvāya*—love for Me.

Thus, the field [the body], knowledge, and the knowable have been described in brief. Knowing this, My devotee becomes eligible to attain love for Me. (13.18)

*prakṛtiṁ puruṣam caiva viddhy anādī ubhāv api
vikārāṁś ca guṇāṁś caiva viddhi prakṛti-sambhavān*

viddhi—know; *ubhau api*—that both; *prakṛtim*—primordial nature; *ca*—and; *eva*—indeed; *puruṣam*—the conscious living being; *anādī*—[are] beginningless; *viddhi*—know [also]; *vikārān ca*—that all modifications; *ca*—and; *guṇān*—the objects derived from the material *guṇas*; *sambhavān*—[are] born of; *prakṛti*—material nature; *eva*—indeed.

Know that both primordial nature and the conscious living beings are beginningless. Know also that all modifications as well as the objects derived from the material *guṇas* are born of material nature. (13.19)

kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate
puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānām bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate

prakṛtiḥ—material nature; *ucyate*—is said to be; *hetuḥ*—the cause; *kartṛtve*—in regard to the agency; *kārya*—[related to] the effect [i.e., the body]; *kāraṇa*—[and] its immediately preceding cause [i.e., the senses]; *puruṣaḥ*—the conscious living being; *ucyate*—is said to be; *hetuḥ*—the cause; *bhoktṛtve*—in the matter of the experiential capacity; *sukha*—for happiness; *duḥkhānām*—[and] misery.

Material nature is said to be the cause in regard to the agency related to the body [as effect] and the senses [as immediately preceding cause]. The conscious living being is said to be the cause in the matter of the experiential capacity for happiness and misery. (13.20)

puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi bhuṅkte prakṛti-jān guṇān
kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu

prakṛti-sthaḥ hi—being situated in matter [i.e., in the body]; *puruṣaḥ*—the living being; *bhuṅkte*—experiences; *guṇān*—the

objects; *prakṛti-jān* — born of material nature; *guṇa-saṅgaḥ* — attachment to material objects [i.e., the products of the *guṇas*]; *kāraṇam* — [is] the cause; *asya* — of its; *janmasu* — births; *sat-asat-yoni* — in higher or lower species.

Being situated in matter [the body], the living being (*puruṣa*) experiences the objects (*guṇas*) born of material nature. Attachment to material objects [the by-products of the *guṇas*] is the cause of its birth in higher or lower species. (13.21)

*upadraṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ
paramātmēti cāpy ukto dehe 'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ*

asmin dehe — in this body; *paraḥ* — [there is] another; *puruṣaḥ* — conscious Self; *uktaḥ api* — who is also referred to; *iti* — thus; *upadraṣṭā* — as the witness; *anumantā* — the sanctioner; *ca* — and; *bhartā* — the sustainer; *bhoktā* — the protector; *mahā-īśvaraḥ* — the Almighty Ruler; *ca* — and; *parama-ātmā* — the Supreme Immanent Self (Paramātmā).

In this body there is another *puruṣa* who is also referred to as the witness, the sanctioner, the sustainer, the protector, the Almighty Ruler and the Supreme Immanent Self (Paramātmā). (13.22)

*ya evaṁ vetti puruṣaṁ prakṛtiṁ ca guṇaiḥ saha
sarvathā vartamāno 'pi na sa bhūyo 'bhijāyate*

yaḥ — one who; *vetti* — knows; *evam* — in this manner; *puruṣam* — the conscious living being; *ca* — and; *prakṛtiṁ* — material nature; *saha* — along with; *guṇaiḥ* — the *guṇas*; *saḥ* — he; *na abhijāyate* — does not take birth; *bhūyaḥ* — again; *vartamānaḥ api* — even though present; *sarvathā* — in whatever situation.

One who knows in this manner the *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, along with its *guṇas*, does not take birth again, regardless of whatever his present condition of life may be. (13.23)

*dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā
anye sāṅkhyena yogena karma-yogena cāpare*

kecit—some; *paśyanti*—directly perceive; *ātmānam*—the Supreme Self; *ātmanā*—self-disclosed; *ātmani*—within the heart; *dhyānena*—through meditation; *anye*—others; *sāṅkhyena*—through the path of analytic knowledge; [others]; *yogena*—through the path of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*; *apare ca*—and others still; *karma-yogena*—through the path of motiveless action.

Some directly perceive the *ātmā* [the Supreme Self] self-disclosed within the heart through meditation [on the Supreme], others do so through the path of analytic knowledge (*sāṅkhya*), others through the path of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, and still others through the path of motiveless action (*karma-yoga*). (13.24)

*anye tv evam ajānantaḥ śrutvānyebhya upāsate
te 'pi cātitaranty eva mṛtyum śruti-parāyaṇāḥ*

anye—others; *tu*—however; *ajānantaḥ*—being unacquainted; *evam*—in this way [i.e., with such methods]; *upāsate*—engage in worship; *śrutvā*—on hearing; *anyebhyaḥ*—from others; *te*—they; *api*—also; *śruti-parāyaṇāḥ*—being devoted to the process of hearing; *eva*—certainly; *atitaranti*—cross over; *mṛtyum ca*—even death.

Others, however, being unacquainted with such methods, engage in worship upon hearing about them from others

[teachers]. They also, being devoted to the process of hearing, certainly cross over even death. (13.25)

*yāvat sañjāyate kiñcit sattvaṁ sthāvara-jaṅgamam
kṣetra-kṣetra-jña-saṁyogāt tad viddhi bharatarṣabha*

bharata-ṛṣabha—O best of the Bharatas; *yāvat kiñcit*—whatever; *sattvaṁ*—living being; *sañjāyate*—is born; *sthāvara-jaṅgamam*—[be it] non-moving or moving; *viddhi*—know; *tat*—that; *saṁyogāt*—[as having been generated] from the conjunction; *kṣetra*—[of] the field [the body]; *kṣetra-jña*—[and] the knower of the field.

O best of the Bharatas, whatever living being is born, be it moving or non-moving, know that as having been generated from the conjunction of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*. (13.26)

*samaṁ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantaṁ parameśvaram
vinaśyatsv avinaśyantaṁ yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati*

yaḥ—one who; *paśyati*—sees; *parama-īśvaram*—the Supreme Regulator; *samaṁ*—as equally; *tiṣṭhantaṁ*—situated; *sarveṣu*—in all; *bhūteṣu*—living beings; *avinaśyantaṁ*—[and] as the imperishable; *vinaśyatsu*—within the perishable; *saḥ*—he; *paśyati*—actually sees.

One who sees the Supreme Regulator as equally situated in all living beings and as the imperishable within the perishable actually sees. (13.27)

*samaṁ paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam īśvaram
na hinasty ātmanātmānam tato yāti parāṁ gatim*

hi—verily; *paśyan*—seeing; *īśvaram*—God; *samam*—equally; *samavasthitam*—situated; *sarvatra*—everywhere; *na hinasti*—one does not degrade; *ātmānam*—the self; *ātmanā*—by the mind; *tataḥ*—consequently; *yāti*—he attains; *parām*—the supreme; *gatim*—goal.

Verily, seeing the Lord equally situated everywhere, one does not degrade the self by the mind, and consequently, one attains the supreme goal. (13.28)

*prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ
yaḥ paśyati tathātmānam akartāram sa paśyati*

yaḥ—one who; *paśyati*—sees; *sarvaśaḥ*—[that] all; *karmāṇi*—actions; *kriyamāṇāni*—are being performed; *eva ca*—exclusively; *prakṛtyā*—by material nature; *tathā*—and; *ātmānam*—[that] the self; *akartāram*—[is] the non-doer; *saḥ*—he; *paśyati*—actually sees.

A person who sees that all actions are performed exclusively by material nature and that the self is the non-doer actually sees. (13.29)

*yadā bhūta-prthag-bhāvam eka-stham anupaśyati
tata eva ca vistāram brahma sampadyate tadā*

yadā—when; *anupaśyati*—one recognizes; *prthag-bhāvam*—the diversity; *bhūta*—[of] living beings; *eka-stham*—as situated in a singularity [*prakṛti*]; *ca*—and; *vistāram*—[that their] emanation; *tataḥ eva*—is from that alone; *tadā*—then; *sampadyate*—one realizes; *brahma*—Brahman.

When one recognizes the diversity of living beings as situated in a singularity [*prakṛti*], and that their emanation is

from that one alone, such a person realizes Brahman. (13.30)

*anāditvān nirguṇatvāt paramātmāyam avyayaḥ
śarīra-stho 'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate*

kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; *ayam*—this; *avyayaḥ*—imperishable; *parama*—Supreme; *ātmā*—Self; *anāditvāt*—being beginningless; *nirguṇatvāt*—[and] devoid of material qualities; *na karoti*—neither acts; *na lipyate*—nor is implicated; *śarīra-sthaḥ api*—although dwelling in the body.

O son of Kuntī, this imperishable Supreme Self, being beginningless and devoid of material qualities, neither acts nor is implicated [in the *karma* performed by the body], although dwelling in the body. (13.31)

*yathā sarva-gataṁ saukṣmyād ākāśaṁ nopalipyate
sarvatrāvasthito dehe tathātmā nopalipyate*

yathā—just as; *sarva-gataṁ*—all-pervading; *ākāśaṁ*—space; *na upalipyate*—remains uncontaminated; *saukṣmyāt*—due to its subtle nature; *tathā*—similarly; *ātmā*—the self; *avasthitaḥ*—[though] situated; *sarvatra dehe*—in all bodies; *na upalipyate*—is not tainted.

Just as all-pervading space remains uncontaminated due to its subtle nature, so also the *ātmā*, though situated in all bodies, is not tainted by the attributes of those bodies. (13.32)

*yathā prakāśayaty ekaḥ kṛtsnaṁ lokam imaṁ raviḥ
kṣetram kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṁ prakāśayati bhārata*

bhārata — O descendant of Bharata; *yathā* — just as; *ekaḥ* — the one; *raviḥ* — sun; *prakāśayati* — illuminates; *imam* — this; *kṛtsnam* — entire; *lokam* — world; *tathā* — similarly; *kṣetrī* — the self; *prakāśayati* — illuminates; *kṛtsnam* — the complete; *kṣetram* — body.

O descendant of Bharata, just as the one sun illuminates this entire world, in the same way, the self illuminates the complete *kṣetra*. (13.33)

*kṣetra-kṣetra-jñāyor evam antaram jñāna-caṣṣuṣā
bhūta-prakṛti-mokṣam ca ye vidur yānti te param*

ye — those who; *evam viduḥ* — thus know; *jñāna-caṣṣuṣā* — through the eye of discrimination; *antaram* — the difference; *kṣetra* — [between] the body; *kṣetra-jñayoh* — [and] the knower of the body; *ca* — as well as; *bhūta* — the living being's; *mokṣam* — means of deliverance; *prakṛti* — from material nature; *te* — they; *yānti* — attain; *param* — the supreme destination.

Those who thus know, through the eye of discrimination, the difference between the body and the knower of the body, as well as the living being's means of deliverance from material nature, attain the supreme destination. (13.34)



1. This verse is found only in the Bengali edition of *Bhagavad Gītā*, and therefore, we have numbered it as zero to keep the verse numbers in consonance with the Gita Press edition.

CHAPTER 14

THE PATH BEYOND THE THREE GUṆAS

GUṆA-TRAYA-VIBHĀGA-YOGA

At the end of Chapter 13, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa said that one who perceives through the eye of wisdom the difference between *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña* attains the Supreme. This naturally gives rise to the following questions: What exactly is that wisdom (*jñāna*), what is its value or glory, and how is it gained? Śrī Kṛṣṇa answers these questions in Chapter 14. This chapter contains twenty-seven verses, one spoken by Arjuna and the remaining by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The conjunction with *prakṛti* and its evolutes, or modifications, leads to bondage. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa had previously described the nature of *prakṛti* and its evolutes to facilitate giving up one's identification with *prakṛti*. In this chapter, He explains the *guṇas*, which pervade all the evolutes of *prakṛti*.

In the first two verses, Kṛṣṇa praises *jñāna*. He says that those who have taken shelter of this *jñāna* have attained a nature similar to His own (2). Kṛṣṇa then begins a description of *prakṛti* and its *guṇas* that continues through verse 20. He explains that *prakṛti* is like the womb into which God, or the Puruṣa, injects the individual beings, comparing them to the procreational seed (3–4). Thereafter, the various living beings take birth according to their *karma*. *Prakṛti* consists of three *guṇas*, namely, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. *Sattva* is pure and illuminating, but it binds one to happiness and knowledge. *Rajas* is passion and gives rise to desire and material attachment. It binds by attachment to action (*karma*). *Tamas* is

born of ignorance and results in delusion. It leads to carelessness, lethargy, and excessive sleep.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa also describes the outcome of actions performed under the influence of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, respectively, as well as the destination reached by one who passes away under their different influences. These are the basic characteristics of the *guṇas* (5–18). Those who perceive that the *guṇas* alone are functioning, while they themselves are distinct and superior to the *guṇas*, attain the nature of God (19). By transcending the influence of the *guṇas*, one becomes free from the sufferings of birth, death, and old age (20).

Hearing this, Arjuna inquires: “By what characteristics is one known to have transcended these three *guṇas* of nature? What is his conduct, and how does he transcend these three *guṇas*” (21)? Śrī Kṛṣṇa replies in six verses up to the end of the chapter. After describing the characteristics of a person who is beyond the three *guṇas* (22–25), He explains that devotees can attain such a state through unswerving devotion to Him. Such devotees become qualified to realize Brahman (26). In the last verse of this chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains that Brahman is rooted in Him. By this, He implies that His devotees naturally attain realization of Brahman and are free from the three *guṇas*.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*param bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānām jñānam uttamam
yaj jñātvā munayaḥ sarve parām siddhim ito gatāḥ*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *pravakṣyāmi* — I shall describe; *bhūyaḥ* — again; *uttamam* — the preeminent; *param* — [and] supreme; *jñānam* — knowledge; *jñānānām* — among all forms of knowledge; *jñātvā* — realizing; *yaj* — which; *sarve* — all; *munayaḥ* — the enlightened thinkers; *gatāḥ* — attained; *parām* — the supreme; *siddhim* — perfection [of liberation]; *itaḥ* — from this world.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I shall describe again the preeminent and supreme knowledge among all forms of knowledge, realizing which, all the enlightened thinkers attained the supreme perfection of liberation from this world. (14.1)

*idaṁ jñānam upāśritya mama sādharmaṁ āgatāḥ
sarge 'pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca*

[those who]; *upāśritya* — by taking refuge; *idaṁ* — [of] this; *jñānam* — knowledge; *āgatāḥ* — have attained; *mama sādharmaṁ* — sameness with My nature and qualities; *na upajāyante* — are not born; *sarge api* — even at the time of creation; *na vyathanti* — nor are they distressed; *pralaye ca* — at the time of dissolution.

Those who, by taking refuge of this knowledge, have attained sameness with My nature and qualities are not born again even at the time of creation nor are they distressed at the time of dissolution. (14.2)

*mama yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbham dadhāmy aham
sambhavaḥ sarva-bhūtānām tato bhavati bhārata*

bhārata—O descendant of Bharata; *mahat*—the measureless [i.e., illimitable by time or space]; *brahma*—material nature [*prakṛti*]; *mama*—[is] My; *yonih*—womb; *tasmin*—into which; *aham*—I; *dadhāmi*—place; *garbham*—the seed [of conscious beings]; *tataḥ*—from which; *bhavati*—ensues; *sambhavaḥ*—the birth; *sarva-bhūtānām*—of all beings.

O descendant of Bharata, the measureless material nature (Brahman)¹ is My womb wherein I place the seed of all conscious beings, from which ensues the birth of all beings. (14.3)

*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ
tāsāṃ brahma mahad yonir ahaṃ bīja-pradaḥ pitā*

kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; *yāḥ*—whatever; *mūrtayaḥ*—forms; *sambhavanti*—are generated; *sarva-yoniṣu*—in all species of life; *mahad brahma*—the measureless material nature; *tāsām*—[is] their; *yonih*—source; *aham*—[and] I [am]; *bīja-pradaḥ*—the seed-giving; *pitā*—father.

O son of Kuntī, whatever forms are born in all species of life, the measureless material nature is their source, and I am the seed-giving father. (14.4)

*sattvam rajas tama iti guṇāḥ prakṛti-sambhavāḥ
nibadhnanti mahā-bāho dehe dehinam avyayam*

guṇāḥ—the *guṇas*; *iti*—namely; *sattvam*—luminosity; *rajaḥ*—dynamism; *tamaḥ*—[and] inertia; *sambhavāḥ*—which are born of; *prakṛti*—material nature; *nibadhnanti*—bind;

avyayam — the imperishable; *dehinam* — embodied being; *dehe* — to the body; *mahā-bāho* — O mighty-armed.

The *guṇas* — namely, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* — which are born of material nature,² bind the imperishable embodied being to the body, O mighty-armed. (14.5)

*tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt prakāśakam anāmayam
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti jñāna-saṅgena cānagha*

tatra — out of these; *sattvaṁ* — *sattva*; *nirmalatvāt* — because of being pure; *prakāśakam* — is illuminating; *anāmayam* — [and] free from misery; [but]; *anagha* — O sinless one; *badhnāti* — it binds; *sukha-saṅgena* — by attachment to happiness; *ca* — and; *jñāna-saṅgena* — by attachment to knowledge.

Of these, *sattva*, being pure, is illuminating and free from misery. But, O sinless one, it binds by attachment to happiness and knowledge. (14.6)

*rajo rāgātmakam viddhi tṛṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya karma-saṅgena dehinam*

viddhi — know; *rajaḥ* — *rajas*; *rāga-ātmakam* — to be of the nature of passion; *samudbhavam* — [and] the source; *tṛṣṇā* — [of] desire; *saṅga* — [and] attachment; *kaunteya* — O son of Kuntī; *tat* — it [rajas]; *nibadhnāti* — binds; *dehinam* — the embodied self; *karma-saṅgena* — by attachment to action.

Know *rajas* to be of the nature of passion and the source of desire and attachment. O son of Kuntī, it binds the embodied self by attachment to action. (14.7)

*tamas tv ajñāna-jam viddhi mohanam sarva-dehinām
pramādālasya-nidrābhis tan nibadhnāti bhārata*

viddhi—know; *tamaḥ*—*tamas*; *tu*—however; *ajñāna-jam*—to be the source of ignorance; *mohanam*—the deluder; *sarva-dehinām*—of all embodied beings; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata; *tat*—it [*tamas*]; *nibadhnāti*—binds fast; *pramāda*—[by] carelessness; *ālasya*—lethargy; *nidrābhiḥ*—[and] sleep.

Know *tamas*, however, to be the source of ignorance,³ the deluder of all embodied beings. O descendant of Bharata, it binds fast through carelessness, lethargy, and sleep. (14.8)

*sattvam sukhe sañjayati rajah karmani bhārata
jñānam āvṛtya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayaty uta*

sattvam—*sattva*; *sañjayati*—binds one; *sukhe*—to happiness; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata; *rajah*—*rajas*; *karmani*—to action; *tu*—while; *tamaḥ*—*tamas*; *āvṛtya*—obscuring; *jñānam*—knowledge; *sañjayati*—enslaves one; *uta*—indeed; *pramāde*—to negligence.

Sattva binds one to happiness, O descendant of Bharata, rajas to action, while *tamas*, obscuring knowledge, enslaves one indeed to negligence. (14.9)

*rajas tamaś cābhibhūya sattvam bhavati bhārata
rajah sattvam tamaś caiva tamaḥ sattvam rajas tathā*

bhārata—O descendant of Bharata; *sattvam*—*sattva*; *bhavati*—prevails; *abhibhūya*—by overpowering; *rajah*—*rajas*; *ca*—and; *tamaḥ*—*tamas*; *rajah*—*rajas* [prevails]; [by overpowering]; *sattvam*—*sattva*; *ca eva*—and indeed; *tamaḥ*—*tamas*; *tathā*—

and; *tamaḥ*—*taṃas* [prevails]; [by overpowering]; *sattvam*—*sattva*; *rajaḥ*—[and] *rajas*.

O descendant of Bharata, *sattva* prevails by overpowering *rajas* and *taṃas*, *rajas* prevails by overpowering *sattva* and *taṃas*, and *taṃas* prevails by overpowering *sattva* and *rajas*. (14.10)

*sarva-dvāreṣu dehe 'smin prakāśa upajāyate
jñānam yadā tadā vidyāt vivṛddham sattvam ity uta*

yadā—when; *jñānam*—knowledge; *prakāśaḥ*—illuminating the factual nature of objects; *upajāyate*—arises; *sarva-dvāreṣu*—in all the gates [i.e., the cognitive senses]; *asmin dehī*—of this body; *tadā*—then; *vidyāt*—one should know; *iti*—thus; *sattvam*—that *sattva*; *vivṛddham*—[is] predominant; *uta*—indeed.

When knowledge illuminating the factual nature of objects arises in all the cognitive senses, which are the gates into the body, then one should know that *sattva* is indeed predominant. (14.11)

*lobhaḥ pravṛttir ārambhaḥ karmaṇām aśamaḥ spṛhā
rajasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha*

bharata-ṛṣabha—O best of the Bharatas; *vivṛddhe*—[when] there is a predominance; *rajasi*—of *rajas*; *lobhaḥ*—greed; *pravṛttiḥ*—activity; *ārambhaḥ*—undertaking; *karmaṇām*—of work; *aśamaḥ*—[and] uncontrollable; *spṛhā*—desire; *etāni*—all these; *jāyante*—become manifest.

O best of the Bharatas, when *rajas* is predominant, greed, activity, undertaking of work [with a material motive], and

uncontrollable desire for sense objects become manifest. (14.12)

*aprakāśo 'pravṛttiś ca pramādo moha eva ca
tamasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe kuru-nandana*

kuru-nandana — O descendant of Kuru; *vivṛddhe* — [when] there is a predominance; *tamasi* — of *tamas*; *aprakāśaḥ* — absence of discrimination; *ca* — and; *apravṛttiḥ* — indifference to duty; *pramādaḥ* — carelessness; *eva ca* — and indeed; *mohaḥ* — delusion; *etāni* — all these; *jāyante* — become manifest.

O descendant of Kuru, when *tamas* is predominant, absence of discrimination, indifference to duty, carelessness, and delusion become manifest. (14.13)

*yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu pralayaṁ yāti deha-bhṛt
tadottama-vidāṁ lokān amalān pratipadyate*

deha-bhṛt — [if] an embodied being; *yāti* — meets; *pralayaṁ* — with death; *yadā tu* — when; *pravṛddhe* — there is a predominance; *sattve* — of *sattva*; *tadā* — then; *pratipadyate* — he attains; *amalān* — the pure; *lokān* — worlds; *uttama-vidāṁ* — [reached by those] of the highest wisdom.

If an embodied being meets with death when *sattva* is predominant, he attains the pure worlds reached by those of the highest wisdom. (14.14)

*rajasi pralayaṁ gatvā karma-saṅgiṣu jāyate
tathā pralīnas tamasi mūḍha-yoniṣu jāyate*

gatvā — on meeting; *pralayaṁ* — with death; *rajasi* — in *rajas*; *jāyate* — one takes birth; *karma-saṅgiṣu* — among those

attached to action; *tathā* — similarly; *pralīnaḥ* — one who dies; *tamasi* — in *tamas*; *jāyate* — takes birth; *mūḍha-yoniṣu* — in the ignorant species of life.

If one dies under the influence of *rajas*, he takes birth among those attached to action; similarly, if one dies when *tamas* is predominant, he is born among the ignorant species of life. (14.15)

*karmaṇaḥ sukṛtasyāhuḥ sāttvikam nirmalam phalam
rajasas tu phalam duḥkham ajñānam tamasaḥ phalam*

phalam — the result; *su-kṛtasya* — of meritorious; *karmaṇaḥ* — action; *āhuḥ* — is said; *sāttvikam* — to be of the nature of *sattva*; *nirmalam* — [and] pure; *tu* — but; *phalam* — the result; *rajasas* — of *rajas*; *duḥkham* — [is] misery; *phalam* — [and] the result; *tamasaḥ* — of *tamas*; *ajñānam* — [is] ignorance.

The result of meritorious action is said to be *sāttvika* and pure. But the result of *rājasika* action is misery, and the result of *tāmasika* action is ignorance. (14.16)

*sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam rajaso lobha eva ca
pramāda-mohau tamaso bhavato 'jñānam eva ca*

jñānam — knowledge; *sañjāyate* — springs; *sattvāt* — from *sattva*; *ca* — whereas; *rajasas* — from *rajas*; *lobhaḥ* — greed; *eva* — alone [arises]; *tamasaḥ* — from *tamas*; *bhavataḥ* — arise; *pramāda* — inattention; *mohau* — delusion; *eva ca* — and indeed; *ajñānam* — ignorance.

Knowledge springs from *sattva*, whereas from *rajas*, only greed arises. Likewise, from *tamas* arise inattention, delusion, and ignorance. (14.17)

*ūrdhvaṃ gacchanti sattva-sthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ
jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ*

sattva-sthāḥ—those who are situated in *sattva*; *gacchanti*—ascend; *ūrdhvaṃ*—upwards; *rājasāḥ*—those of the nature of *rajas*; *tiṣṭhanti*—remain; *madhye*—in the middle region; *tāmasāḥ*—[and] those of the nature of *tamas*; *vṛtti-sthāḥ*—who are stuck in base behavior and nature; *jaghanya*—[born of] the lowest; *guṇa*—quality; *gacchanti*—glide; *adhaḥ*—downwards.

Those who are situated in *sattva* ascend upwards [to higher regions], those of the nature of *rajas* remain in the middle region [the earthly sphere], and those of the nature of *tamas*, who are stuck in base behavior and nature born of the lowest qualities, glide downwards [to lower regions]. (14.18)

*nānyaṃ guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṃ yadā draṣṭānupaśyati
guṇebhyaś ca paraṃ vetti mad-bhāvaṃ so 'dhigacchati*

yadā—when; *draṣṭā*—the seer [i.e., the person of awakened discrimination]; *anupaśyati*—sees; *na*—no; *anyaṃ*—other; *kartāraṃ*—agent; *guṇebhyaḥ*—than the *guṇas*; *ca*—and; *vetti*—knows [himself]; *paraṃ*—as beyond; *guṇebhyaḥ*—the *guṇas*; *saḥ*—he; *adhigacchati*—attains; *mat-bhāvaṃ*—My nature.

When a person of discrimination sees no other agent than the *guṇas* of material nature and knows himself as beyond the *guṇas*, then he attains My nature. (14.19)

*guṇān etān atītya trīn dehī deha-samudbhavān
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-duḥkhair vimukto 'mṛtam aśnute*

atītya—having transcended; *etān*—these; *trīn*—three; *guṇān*—*guṇas*; *samudbhavān*—which are the source of production;

deha — [of] the body; *dehī* — the embodied being; *vimuktaḥ* — is freed; *janma* — [from] birth; *mṛtyu* — death; *jarā* — old age; *duḥkhaiḥ* — [and] miseries; *aśnute* — [and] attains; *amṛtam* — liberation.

Having transcended these three *guṇas* of nature, which are the source of production of the body, the embodied being is freed from birth, death, old age, and all types of miseries, and attains liberation. (14.20)

arjuna uvāca

kair liṅgaḥ trīn guṇān etān atīto bhavati prabho

kim ācāraḥ katham caitāms trīn guṇān ativartate

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna inquired; *prabho* — O Master; *kaiḥ* — by what; *liṅgaiḥ* — symptoms; *bhavati* — is a person [characterized]; *atītaḥ* — who has transcended; *etān* — these; *trīn* — three; *guṇān* — *guṇas*; *kim* — what; *ācāraḥ* — [is his] conduct; *ca* — and; *katham* — how; *ativartate* — does he transcend; *etān* — these; *trīn* — three; *guṇān* — *guṇas*.

Arjuna inquired: O Master, by what characteristics is one known to have transcended these three *guṇas* of nature? What is his conduct and how does he transcend these three *guṇas*? (14.21)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

prakāśam ca pravṛttiṁ ca moham eva ca pāṇḍava

na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati

udāsīna-vad āsīno guṇair yo na vicālyate

guṇā vartanta ity evam yo 'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate

sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ sva-sthaḥ sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanaḥ

tulya-priyāpriyo dhīras tulya-nindātma-saṁstutiḥ

*mānāpamānayos tulyas tulyo mitrāri-pakṣayoḥ
sarvārambha-parityāgī guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān replied; *pāṇḍava* — O son of Pāṇḍu; *saḥ* — a person; *ucyate* — is said; *guṇa-atītaḥ* — to have transcended the *guṇas*; *na dveṣṭi* — who is not averse; *prakāśam ca* — to the light of knowledge; *ca* — and; *pravṛttim* — to activity; *ca* — and; *moham eva* — even to delusion; *sampravṛttāni* — when they are present; *na kāṅkṣati* — nor hankers for them; *nivṛttāni* — when they have ceased; *yaḥ* — who; *āsīnaḥ* — remains [like a witness]; *udāsīnavat* — as if indifferent; *na vicālyate* — who is undisturbed; *guṇaiḥ* — by the *guṇas*; *yaḥ* — who; *na ṅgate* — does not waver; *avatiṣṭhati* — remaining firmly situated; *iti evam* — in this understanding; *guṇāḥ* — [that] the *guṇas* [alone]; *vartante* — are functioning; *sama* — who is equal; *duḥkha* — in distress; *sukhaḥ* — [and] happiness; *sva-sthaḥ* — who is situated in the self; *sama* — who regards as equal; *loṣṭa* — a clod of mud; *aśma* — a stone; *kāñcanaḥ* — [and] a piece of gold; *tulya* — who considers alike; *priya* — both the favorable; *apriyaḥ* — [and] the unfavorable; *dhīraḥ* — who is steady; *tulya* — remaining equally disposed; *nindā* — toward censure; *ātma-saṁstutiḥ* — [and] praise of himself; *tulyaḥ* — who is equal; *māna* — in honor; *apamānayoḥ* — [and] in dishonor; *tulyaḥ* — who regards alike; *pakṣayoḥ* — both the partisans; *mitra* — [of] friend; *ari* — [and] foe; *parityāgī* — [and] who is a renouncer; *sarva* — [of] all; *ārambha* — undertakings.

Śrī Bhagavān replied: O son of Pāṇḍu, a person is said to have transcended the *guṇas* of nature who is not averse to the light of knowledge, to activity, and even to delusion when they are present, nor hankers for them when they have ceased; who remains like a witness, as if indifferent, who is undisturbed by the *guṇas* of nature, and who is unwavering, remaining

firmly situated in the understanding that the *guṇas* of nature alone are functioning; who is equal in happiness and distress, who is situated in the self, who regards as equal a clod of mud, a stone, and a piece of gold, who considers alike both favorable and unfavorable objects and situations, and who is steady, remaining equally disposed toward censure and praise; who is equal in honor and dishonor, who treats alike both friend and foe, and who has renounced all undertakings. (14.22–25)

*mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

yaḥ—a person who; *sevate*—serves; *mām ca*—Me alone; *avyabhicāreṇa*—through unswerving; *bhakti-yogena*—devotional yoga; *saḥ*—he; *samatītya*—transcending completely; *etān*—these; *guṇān*—*guṇas*; *kalpate*—becomes eligible; *brahma-bhūyāya*—to realize Brahman.

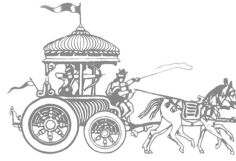
A person who serves Me alone through unswerving devotion, completely transcends these *guṇas* of nature and becomes eligible to realize Brahman. (14.26)

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca*

hi—verily; *aham*—I [am]; *pratiṣṭhā*—the shelter; *brahmaṇaḥ*—of Brahman; *ca*—and; *amṛtasya*—of the imperishable; *avyayasya*—immortality; *ca*—and; *śāśvatasya*—of the eternal; *dharmasya*—*dharma*; *ca*—and; *aikāntikasya*—of absolute; *sukhasya*—bliss.

Verily, I am the shelter of Brahman, of the imperishable immortality, of the eternal *dharma* [devotion], and of

absolute bliss [love]. (14.27)



1. The word *brahman*, meaning that which is the source of unlimited expansion, generally refers to Absolute Reality, but it can also signify material nature (*prakṛti*), which is also the source of unlimited expansion in the form of its innumerable evolutes.

2. The three *guṇas* are stated here as being born of material nature. But in other places, such as *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, they are described as the constituents of material nature. There is no contradiction in these two descriptions as they correspond to two different states of the *guṇas*. In the unmanifest state, the *guṇas* remain in equilibrium, and thus no evolution occurs. The *guṇas*' existence even in this primordial state clearly shows that they are constituents of *prakṛti*. The disequilibrated state in which the *guṇas* become active is merely referred to as taking birth, because it is only in this state that the functions of the *guṇas* are perceived.

3. The literal meaning here is that *tamas* is born of ignorance. This means that *tamas* is known by the presence of ignorance. In that sense, it is said to be born of ignorance, although ignorance is the outcome of *tamas*.

CHAPTER 15

THE PATH OF REVELATION OF THE SUPREME PERSON PURUṢOTTAMA-YOGA

In Chapter 12, Śrī Kṛṣṇa confirmed that it is more difficult for those whose thoughts are set on the unmanifest to attain their goal. Because of attachment to the body, all our experiences are related to objects which have form, and thus it is difficult to conceive of anything without form or unmanifest. It is therefore easier to fix the mind on the personal form of God. The topic of how to overcome this difficulty of bodily consciousness as well as the description of the Absolute have been explained in Chapters 13 and 14.

Living entities, being integrated parts of God's energy, are transcendental, but because of their identification with the body, an evolute of the *guṇas*, and because of their attachment to the world, they become bound. They are not liberated from these *guṇas* as long as they remain unaware of the glory of Bhagavān. Therefore, in Chapter 15, Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains His glory and mystery, which enables one to cultivate unswerving devotion. There are twenty verses in this chapter which are all spoken by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Since living beings are integrated parts of God's energy, their natural state is to serve and love only Him. However, by the influence of *māyā*, they assume an affinity for the body, the senses, the mind, and intellect, which are evolutes of nature, by regarding them as "I" or "mine" or "for me." This is the main stumbling block to exclusive devotion.

After describing the cosmos as an Aśvattha tree, Bhagavān exhorts Arjuna to cut down this tree with the axe of dispassion in order to remove the influence of *māyā* and take shelter of Him, the primeval person, and His abode (1–4). He first describes this abode (5–6), and then the *jīva* (the individual living being) and his transmigration from one body to another (7–8). The *yogīs* are able to perceive this but others cannot (10–11). Kṛṣṇa explains His own glory, as the source, cause, and support of everything (12–15). He then explains the distinction between Paramātmā, the *jīva*, and material nature (16–18). One who knows Him in this way becomes devoted to Him: “One who, being undeluded, knows Me thus as the Supreme Person, is a knower of all things and worships Me with full devotion” (19). To inspire devotion to Himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa reveals this most confidential knowledge (20).

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*ūrdhva-mūlam adhaḥ-śākham aśvatthaṁ prāhur avyayam
chandāmsi yasya parṇāni yas taṁ veda sa veda-vit*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān said; *prāhuḥ* — it is said [in the Vedas]; *avyayam* — [that there is] an imperishable; *aśvatthaṁ* — banyan tree; *mūlam* — whose roots; *ūrdhva* — [are] upward; *śākham* — [and] whose branches; *adhaḥ* — [are] downward; *parṇāni* — [and] the leaves; *yasya* — of which; *chandāmsi* — [are] the Vedic hymns; *yaḥ* — one who; *veda* — knows; *taṁ* — it; *saḥ* — he; *veda-vit* — [is] a knower of the Vedas.

Śrī Bhagavān said: It is said [in the Vedas] that there is an imperishable Aśvattha tree whose roots are upward and whose branches are downward, and the leaves of which are the Vedic hymns. One who knows this tree is a knower of the Vedas. (15.1)

*adhaś cordhvaṁ prasṛtās tasya śākhā
guṇa-pravṛddhā viṣaya-pravālāḥ
adhaś ca mūlāny anusantatāni
karmānubandhīni manuṣya-loke*

tasya — its; *śākhāḥ* — branches; *pravṛddhāḥ* — being augmented; *guṇa* — by the *guṇas*; *pravālāḥ* — [and bearing] tender leaves; *viṣaya* — [in the form of] the sense objects; *prasṛtāḥ* — are spread; *ūrdhvaṁ* — above; *ca* — and; *adhaḥ* — below; *mūlāni* — [its secondary] roots; *anubandhīni* — that cause perpetual binding; *karma* — to *karma*; *anusantatāni* — extend; *adhaḥ* — downward; *ca* — also; *manuṣya-loke* — into the world of human beings.

Its branches, being nourished by the *guṇas* of nature and bearing tender leaves in the form of the sense objects, are spread above and below. Its [secondary]¹ roots that cause perpetual binding to *karma* extend downward also into the world of human beings. (15.2)

*na rūpam asyeha tathopalabhyate
nānto na cādir na ca sampratiṣṭhā
aśvattham enam su-virūḍha-mūlam
asaṅga-śastreṇa drḍhena chittvā
tataḥ padaṁ tat parimārgitavyaṁ
yasmin gatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ
tam eva cādyam puruṣam prapadye
yataḥ pravṛttiḥ prasṛtā purāṇī*

rūpam — the form; *asya* — of this [tree]; *tathā* — as previously described; *na upalabhyate* — is unascertainable; *iha* — in this world; *na antaḥ* — it is without end; *na ca ādiḥ* — without beginning; *na ca sampratiṣṭhā* — and without support; *chittvā* — on cutting; *enam* — this; *su-virūḍha* — deeply; *mūlam* — rooted; *aśvattham* — banyan tree; *drḍhena* — with the powerful; *śastreṇa* — weapon; *asaṅga* — [of] detachment; *tataḥ* — thereafter; *parimārgitavyam* — one should search diligently; *tat* — [for] that; *padam* — destination; *gatāḥ* — attaining; *yasmin* — which; *na nivartanti* — people do not return; *bhūyaḥ* — again; [declaring]; *prapadye* — I take shelter; *tam* — of Him; *eva ca* — alone; *ādyam* — the Primeval; *puruṣam* — Person; *yataḥ* — from whom; *purāṇī* — [this] ancient; *pravṛttiḥ* — creation; *prasṛtā* — has come forth.

The form of this tree as previously described is unascertainable in this material world; it is without end, without beginning, and without support. After cutting this

deep-rooted Aśvattha tree with the powerful weapon of detachment, one should diligently search for that destination after reaching which people do not return again, declaring, “I take shelter of this Primeval Person alone from whom this ancient creation has come forth.” (15.3–4)

*nirmāna-mohā jita-saṅga-doṣā
adhyātma-nityā vinivṛtta-kāmāḥ
dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukha-duḥkha-sañjñair
gacchanty amūḍhāḥ padam avyayam tat*

[the wise]; *nirmāna-mohāḥ* — who are freed from pride and delusion; *jita* — who have conquered; *doṣāḥ* — the evils; *saṅga* — [of] attachment; *nityāḥ* — who are ever devoted; *adhyātma* — to spiritual pursuits; *vinivṛtta* — who are completely free; *kāmāḥ* — [from] material desires; *vimuktāḥ* — who are liberated; *dvandvaiḥ* — from the dualities; *sañjñaiḥ* — referred to as; *sukha* — pleasure; *duḥkha* — [and] pain; *amūḍhāḥ* — [and] who are beyond delusion; *gacchanti* — attain; *tat* — to that; *avyayam* — eternal; *padam* — abode.

The wise, who are freed from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evils of material attachment, who are ever devoted to spiritual pursuits, who are completely free from material desires, who are liberated from the dualities in the form of pleasure and pain, and who are beyond delusion attain to that eternal abode. (15.5)

*na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ
yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama*

na — neither; *sūryaḥ* — the sun; *na* — nor; *śaśāṅkaḥ* — the moon; *na* — nor; *pāvakaḥ* — fire; *bhāsayate* — illuminates; *tat* —

that [realm]; *tat* — that [is]; *mama* — My; *paramam* — supreme; *dhāma* — abode; *gatvā* — attaining; *yat* — which; *na nivartante* — one never returns.

Neither the sun, nor the moon, nor fire illuminates that realm. It is My supreme abode, attaining which one never returns. (15.6)

*mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥ-ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati*

sanātanaḥ — the eternal; *jīva-bhūtaḥ* — living being; *aṁśaḥ* — [is] an integrated part; *mama eva* — of Me alone; *jīva-loke* — in this material world; *karṣati* — it draws [to itself, i.e., is entangled with]; *manaḥ* — the mind; *ṣaṣṭhāni* — [as] the sixth [sense]; *indriyāṇi* — [and] the five cognitive senses; *sthāni* — which are rooted; *prakṛti* — in phenomenality.

The eternal living being is an integrated part of Me alone. In this material world, it is entangled with the mind and the five cognitive senses, which are rooted in phenomenality. (15.7)

*śarīram yad avāpnoti yac cāpy utkrāmatīśvaraḥ
grhītvaitāni saṁyāti vāyur gandhān ivāśayāt*

īśvaraḥ — [when] the master of the body; *avāpnoti* — acquires; *yat* — whatever; *śarīram* — body; *utkrāmati* — [and] leaves; *yat ca api* — whatever [body]; *saṁyāti* — he departs; *grhītvā* — taking with him; *etāni* — these [six senses]; *iva* — just as; *vāyuh* — the air [carries]; *gandhān* — odors; *āśayāt* — from their fragrant source.

When the master of the body [the living entity] acquires a new body after leaving an old one, he departs taking with

him these six senses, just as the breeze carries odors from their fragrant source. (15.8)

*śrotram cakṣuḥ sparśanam ca rasanam ghrāṇam eva ca
adhiṣṭhāya manaś cāyam viṣayān upasevate*

adhiṣṭhāya — presiding over; *śrotram* — [the senses of] hearing; *cakṣuḥ* — sight; *ca* — and; *sparśanam* — touch; *rasanam* — taste; *eva ca* — and; *ghrāṇam* — smell; *ca* — as well as; *manaḥ* — the mind; *ayam* — he [the living being]; *upasevate* — experientially appropriates; *viṣayān* — the sense objects.

Presiding over the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell, as well as the mind, the living being experientially appropriates the sense objects. (15.9)

*utkrāmantam sthitam vāpi bhuñjānam vā guṇānvitam
vimūḍhā nānupaśyanti paśyanti jñāna-cakṣuṣaḥ*

vimūḍhāḥ — the dull-witted; *guṇa-anvitam* — who are entangled with the sense faculties; *na anupaśyanti* — do not perceive [the Self]; *utkrāmantam* — while departing from the body; *vā api* — or; *sthitam* — while dwelling in the body; *vā* — or; *bhuñjānam* — while experiencing [the sense objects]; *jñāna-cakṣuṣaḥ* — those endowed with the eye of wisdom [however]; *paśyanti* — realize [It].

The dull-witted who are entangled with the sense faculties do not perceive the Self while departing from the body or while dwelling in it or while experiencing the sense objects [through the senses], but those endowed with the eye of wisdom realize It. (15.10)

*yatanto yoginaś cainam paśyanty ātmany avasthitam
yatanto 'py akṛtātmāno nainam paśyanty acetasaḥ*

yatantaḥ—the endeavoring; *yoginaḥ ca*—yogis; *paśyanti*—directly perceive; *enam*—this [the Self]; *avasthitam*—seated; *ātmani*—in the heart; *akṛta-ātmānaḥ*—[whereas] the impure at heart; *acetasaḥ*—who are devoid of discrimination; *na paśyanti*—do not see; *enam*—this; *yatantaḥ api*—even if they strive to do so.

The endeavoring yogīs directly perceive the Self seated in their hearts, whereas the impure at heart, who are devoid of discrimination, do not see it even if they strive to do so. (15.11)

*yad āditya-gataṁ tejo jagad bhāsayate 'khilam
yac candramasi yac cāgnau tat tejo viddhi māmakam*

tejaḥ—the light; *yat*—which [is]; *āditya-gataṁ*—situated in the sun; *yat*—[and that] which; *candramasi*—[is] in the moon; *ca*—and; *yat*—[that] which; *agnau*—[is] in fire; *bhāsayate*—illuminates; *akhilam*—the entire; *jagat*—world; *viddhi*—know; *tat*—that; *tejaḥ*—light; *māmakam*—to be Mine.

The light of the sun and the light of the moon and that of fire illuminate the entire world. Know that light to be Mine. (15.12)

*gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy aham ojasā
puṣṇāmi cauṣadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ*

ca—and; *āviśya*—entering; *gām*—the earth; *ojasā*—through My own potency; *aham*—I; *dhārayāmi*—support; *bhūtāni*—all living beings; *ca*—and; *bhūtvā*—becoming; *somaḥ*—the

moon; *rasa-ātmakaḥ* — which is full of nectar; *puṣṇāmi* — I nourish; *sarvāḥ* — all; *auśadhīḥ* — plants and medicinal herbs.

Entering the earth through My own potency, I support all living beings, and becoming the moon, which is full of nectar, I nourish all plants and medicinal herbs. (15.13)

*aham vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇinām deham āśritaḥ
prāṇāpāna-samāyuktaḥ pacāmy annam catur-vidham*

aham — I; *āśritaḥ* — having entered; *deham* — the bodies; *prāṇinām* — of all living beings; *bhūtvā* — as [i.e., having become]; *vaiśvānaraḥ* — the fire of digestion; *samāyuktaḥ* — [and] united with; *prāṇa* — the ascending vital current; *apāna* — [and] the descending vital current; *pacāmi* — I digest; *catur-vidham* — the four kinds; *annam* — [of] food.

Having entered the bodies of all living beings as the fire of digestion (*vaiśvānara*), and united with the ascending and descending vital currents,² I digest the four kinds of food.³ (15.14)

*sarvasya cāham hr̥di sanniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam
apohanam ca
vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedānta-kṛt veda-vid eva
cāham*

aham — I [am]; *sanniviṣṭaḥ* — situated; *hr̥di* — in the heart; *sarvasya* — of all beings; *ca* — and; *mattaḥ* — from Me; *smṛtiḥ* — [come] memory; *jñānam* — knowledge; *ca* — and; *apohanam* — the loss [of these two]; *ca* — and; *aham eva* — I alone [am]; *vedyaḥ* — to be known; *sarvaiḥ* — by all; *vedaiḥ* — the Vedas; *eva* — indeed; *aham* — I [am]; *vedānta-kṛt* — the author of the Vedānta; *ca* — and; *veda-vid* — the knower of the Vedas.

I am situated in the hearts of all beings. From Me come memory, knowledge, and their loss [i.e., forgetfulness]. I alone am to be known through all the Vedas. Indeed, I am the author of the Vedānta, and I alone am the knower of the Vedas. (15.15)

*dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭa-stho 'kṣara ucyate*

imau — there are; *dvau* — two kinds of; *puruṣau* — composite beings; *loke* — in this world; *kṣaraḥ ca* — the perishable; *eva ca* — and indeed; *akṣaraḥ* — the imperishable; *sarvāṇi* — all [these]; *bhūtāni* — bodies; *kṣaraḥ* — [are] perishable; *kūṭa-sthaḥ* — [whereas] the immutable [self]; *ucyate* — is called; *akṣaraḥ* — the imperishable.

There are two kinds of *puruṣas* in this world, the perishable [i.e., the body]⁴ and the imperishable [the *ātmā*]. All these bodies are perishable, whereas the immutable [self] is called the imperishable [*ātmā*]. (15.16)

*uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyaḥ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ
yo loka-trayam āviśya bibharti avyaya īśvaraḥ*

tu — but; *anyaḥ* — different [from these two]; *uttamaḥ* — [is] the Supreme; *puruṣaḥ* — Person; *udāhṛtaḥ* — who is called; *parama-ātmā iti* — Paramātmā [the Supreme Immanent Self]; *avyayaḥ* — the imperishable; *īśvaraḥ* — regulator; *yaḥ* — who; *āviśya* — having entered; *loka-trayam* — the three worlds; *bibharti* — sustains [them].

But different from these two is the Supreme Person, who is called Paramātmā, the imperishable regulator, who, having entered the three worlds, sustains them. (15.17)

*yasmāt kṣaram atīto 'hamakṣarād api cottamaḥ
ato 'smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ*

yasmāt—because; *aham*—I [am]; *atītaḥ*—beyond; *kṣaram*—the perishable; *ca*—and; *uttamaḥ*—superior; *api*—even; *akṣarāt*—to the imperishable; *ataḥ*—therefore; *asmi*—I am; *prathitaḥ*—celebrated; *loke*—in this world; *ca*—and; *vede*—in the Vedas; *puruṣa-uttamaḥ*—as the Supreme Person.

Because I am beyond the perishable and superior even to the imperishable, I am celebrated in this world and in the Vedas as the Supreme Person, Puruṣottama. (15.18)

*yo mām evam asammūḍho jānāti puruṣottamam
sa sarva-vid bhajati mām sarva-bhāvena bhārata*

bhārata—O descendant of Bharata; *yaḥ*—one who; *asammūḍhaḥ*—being undeluded; *jānāti*—knows; *mām*—Me; *evam*—thus; *puruṣa-uttamam*—as the Supreme Person; *saḥ*—he; *sarva-vid*—being a knower of everything; *bhajati*—worships; *mām*—Me; *sarva-bhāvena*—with full devotion.

O descendant of Bharata, one who, being undeluded, knows Me thus as the Supreme Person, is a knower of all things and worships Me with full devotion. (15.19)

*iti guhyatamaṁ śāstram idam uktaṁ mayānagha
etat buddhvā buddhimān syāt kṛta-kṛtyaś ca bhārata*

bhārata—O descendant of Bharata; *anagha*—O sinless one; *idam*—this; *guhya-tamam*—most secret; *śāstram*—wisdom; *uktaṁ*—has been expounded; *iti*—thus; *mayā*—by Me; *buddhvā*—realizing; *etat*—this; *syāt*—[a person] becomes;

buddhi-mān — wise; *ca* — and; *kṛta-kṛtyaḥ* — one whose obligations are entirely fulfilled.

O descendant of Bharata, O sinless one, I have thus expounded this most secret wisdom. Realizing this, a person becomes wise and one whose obligations are entirely fulfilled. (15.20)



1. The branches of this tree, when they touch the ground, turn into roots which are called secondary roots. This is how the tree spreads.

2. *Prāṇa* is the ascending and *apāna* the descending vital current.

3. Food can be consumed in four ways: licked, chewed, sucked, and drunk.

4. In the thirteenth chapter, the word *puruṣa* was specifically used for the self, distinct from *prakṛti*. But sometimes the material body is also referred to as a *puruṣa*, or a composite being, as in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*: “This self is made of food” (2.1.1).

CHAPTER 16

THE PATH OF DISTINCTION BETWEEN DIVINE AND UNGODLY NATURES

DAIVĀSURA-SAMPAD-YOGA

In Chapter 15, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa declared that cutting down the Aśvattha tree (which symbolizes the material world) with the weapon of detachment is a mark of the divine nature. Divine nature means complete surrender to God. This implies that those who don't seek refuge in Him are of the materialistic, or ungodly, nature. Now, in Chapter 16, Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the divine and ungodly natures more elaborately. There are twenty-four verses in this chapter, all spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa first lists the qualities that constitute the divine nature (1–3) and then speaks of those belonging to the *asuric*, or materialistic, nature (4). The divine nature leads to liberation, whereas the ungodly nature results in bondage (5). There are two types of people in this world: the divine and the ungodly (6).

Kṛṣṇa enumerates the qualities and behavior belonging to those of the ungodly nature (7–18). Such envious and cruel persons are cast down into hell (19). There are three gates to hell, namely, lust, anger, and greed. One who is free from these three vices endeavors for the supreme welfare of the self and also achieves it (21–22). Kṛṣṇa then speaks about the importance of the revealed scripture, or *śāstra*. Those who do not have faith in *śāstra* are doomed to suffer. Thus, in the final

verse, He recommends that one should know and follow *śāstra* (23–24).

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*abhayaṁ sattva-saṁśuddhir jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ
dānaṁ damaś ca yajñaś ca svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam
ahiṁsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śāntir apaiśunam
dayā bhūteṣv aloluptvaṁ mārḍavam hrīr acāpalam
tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam adroho nāti-mānitā
bhavanti sampadam daivīm abhijātasya bhārata*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *abhayaṁ*—fearlessness; *sattva-saṁśuddhiḥ*—purity of heart; *vyavasthitiḥ*—perseverance; *yoga*—in the methods of cultivation; *jñāna*—[of] immediate insight; *dānam*—charity; *ca*—and; *damaḥ*—control of the external senses; *ca*—and; *yajñaḥ*—sacrifice; *svādhyāyaḥ*—study of the Vedas; *tapaḥ*—austerity; *ārjavam*—straightforwardness; *ahiṁsā*—non-violence; *satyam*—truthfulness; *akrodhaḥ*—absence of anger; *tyāgaḥ*—detachment; *śāntiḥ*—composure of mind; *apaiśunam*—freedom from the tendency to malign others; *dayā*—compassion; *bhūteṣu*—toward all living beings; *aloluptvam*—absence of greed; *mārḍavam*—soft-heartedness; *hrīḥ*—modesty; *acāpalam*—steadiness; *tejaḥ*—vigor; *kṣamā*—tolerance; *dhṛtiḥ*—fortitude; *śaucam*—cleanliness; *adrohaḥ*—freedom from enmity; *na*—[and] the negation [i.e., the absence]; *ati-mānitā*—[of] excessive self-esteem; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata; [these twenty-six qualities]; *bhavanti*—arise; *abhijātasya*—to one who is born of; *daivīm*—the divine; *sampadam*—disposition.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Fearlessness, purity of heart, perseverance in the methods of cultivation of immediate insight (*jñāna*), charity, control of the external senses, sacrifice (*yajña*), study of the Vedas, austerity, straightforwardness, non-violence,

truthfulness, absence of anger, detachment, composure of mind, freedom from the tendency to malign others, compassion toward all living beings, absence of greed, soft-heartedness, modesty, steadiness, vigor, tolerance, fortitude, cleanliness, freedom from enmity, and the absence of excessive self-esteem—O descendant of Bharata, all these qualities arise to one who is born of the divinedisposition. (16.1–3)

*dambho darpo 'bhimānaś ca krodhaḥ pārūṣyam eva ca
ajñānam cābhijātasya pārtha sampadam āsurīm*

dambhaḥ—ostentation; *darpaḥ*—arrogance; *abhimānaḥ*—self-conceit; *ca*—and; *krodhaḥ*—anger; *eva ca*—and indeed; *pārūṣyam*—rudeness; *ca*—and; *ajñānam*—ignorance; *pārtha*—O son of Prthā; [all these arise]; *abhijātasya*—to one who is born of; *āsurīm*—the ungodly; *sampadam*—disposition.

Ostentation, arrogance, self-conceit, anger, rudeness, and ignorance—O Arjuna, all these arise to one who is born of the ungodly disposition. (16.4)

*daivī sampad vimokṣāya nibandhāyāsuri matā
mā śucaḥ sampadam daivīm abhijāto 'si pāṇḍava*

matā—it has been ascertained; *daivī*—[that] the divine; *sampad*—disposition; *vimokṣāya*—results in liberation; *āsuri*—[whereas] the ungodly [disposition]; *nibandhāya*—results in bondage; *mā śucaḥ*—do not grieve; *pāṇḍava*—O son of Pāṇḍu; [because]; *asi*—you are; *abhijātaḥ*—born of; *daivīm*—the divine; *sampadam*—disposition.

It has been ascertained that the divine disposition leads to liberation, whereas the ungodly disposition results in

bondage. Do not grieve, O son of Pāṇḍu, for you are born of the divinedisposition. (16.5)

*dvau bhūta-sargau loke 'smin daiva āsura eva ca
daivo vistaraśaḥ prokta āsuram pārtha me śṛṇu*

pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *dvau* — [there are] two [types]; *bhūta-sargau* — of living beings who take birth; *asmin* — in this; *loke* — world; *daivaḥ* — the divine; *eva ca* — and indeed; *āsuraḥ* — the ungodly; *daivaḥ* — the divine [nature]; *proktaḥ* — has been explained; *vistaraśaḥ* — elaborately; *śṛṇu* — [now] hear; *me* — from Me; *āsuram* — of the ungodly [nature].

O son of Pṛthā, there are two types of beings who take birth in this world—the divine and the ungodly. The divine nature has been elaborately explained; now hear from Me of the ungodlynature. (16.6)

*pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca janā na vidur āsurāḥ
na śaucam nāpi cācāro na satyam teṣu vidyate*

janāḥ — people; *āsurāḥ* — of ungodly nature; *na viduḥ* — do not know; *pravṛttim ca* — [what is] appropriate action; *ca* — and; *nivṛttim* — [what is] to be avoided; *teṣu* — in them; *vidyate* — there exists; *na* — neither; *śaucam* — purity; *na* — nor; *api ca* — also; *ācāraḥ* — virtuous conduct; *na* — nor; *satyam* — truth.

People of ungodly nature do not know what is appropriate action and what is to be avoided. Thus, in them there exists neither purity, nor virtuous conduct, nor truthfulness. (16.7)

*asatyam apratiṣṭham te jagad āhur anīśvaram
aparaspara-sambhūtaṁ kim anyat kāma-haitukam*

te — they; *āhuh* — claim; *jagat* — [that] the cosmos; *asatyam* — [is] unreal; *apraṭiṣṭham* — without foundation; *anīśvaram* — without any Supreme Controller or God; *sambhūtam* — brought forth; *aparaspara* — perpetually [by mutual union]; *kim anyat* — [and] what's more; *kāma-haitukam* — that it is [only] caused by lust.

They claim that this world is unreal, that it is without any foundation, without any God, that it is brought forth perpetually [by mutual union] and, what's more, that it is conceived only out of lust. (16.8)

*etām drṣṭim avaṣṭabhya naṣṭātmāno 'lpa-buddhayaḥ
prabhavanty ugra-karmāṇaḥ kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ*

avaṣṭabhya — upholding; *etām* — this; *drṣṭim* — view; *ahitāḥ* — such hostile individuals; *naṣṭa* — who are bereft; *ātmānaḥ* — of self-awareness; *alpa-buddhayaḥ* — of paltry discrimination; *ugra-karmāṇaḥ* — [and] performers of cruel deeds; *prabhavanti* — take birth; *kṣayāya* — solely for the destruction; *jagataḥ* — of the cosmos.

Upholding this view, such hostile individuals, who are bereft of self-awareness, of paltry discrimination, and performers of cruel deeds, take birth solely for the destruction of the world. (16.9)

*kāmam āśritya duṣpūraṁ dambha-māna-madānvitāḥ
mohād grhītvāsad-grāhān pravartante 'śuci-vratāḥ*

āśritya—taking refuge of; *duṣpūram*—insatiable; *kāmam*—desires; *anvitāḥ*—[and] being possessed of; *dambha*—hypocrisy; *māna*—pride; *mada*—[and] arrogance; *aśuci-vratāḥ*—[such people] of impure vows; *pravartante*—engage in action; *grhītvā*—having adopting; *asat*—false; *grāhān*—doctrines; *mohāt*—out of delusion.

Taking refuge of insatiable desires and being possessed of hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance, such people of impure vows engage in action having adopted false doctrines out of delusion. (16.10)

cintām aparimeyām ca pralayāntām upāśritāḥ
kāmopabhoga-paramā etāvad iti niścītāḥ

upāśritāḥ—falling prey to; *aparimeyām ca*—immeasurable; *cintām*—worries; *pralaya-antām*—that persist until death; *niścītāḥ*—they are convinced; *etāvat iti*—of this much [of the idea]; *kāma-upabhoga*—[that] the enjoyment of sense pleasures; *paramāḥ*—[is] the ultimate aim.

Falling prey to immeasurable worries that persist until death, they are convinced of the idea that the enjoyment of sense pleasures is the ultimate aim. (16.11)

āśā-pāśa-śatair baddhāḥ kāma-krodha-parāyaṇāḥ
īhante kāma-bhogārtham anyāyenārtha-sañcayān

baddhāḥ—being bound; *āśā-pāśa-śataiḥ*—by the shackles of hundreds of [false] hopes; *parāyaṇāḥ*—[and] fully engrossed; *kāma*—[in] lust; *krodha*—[and] anger; *īhante*—they strive; *sañcayān*—to hoard; *artha*—wealth; *anyāyena*—by illegal means; *artham*—in order to obtain; *kāma-bhoga*—sensual pleasures.

Being bound by the shackles of hundreds of false hopes, and fully engrossed in lust and anger, they strive to hoard wealth by illegal means in order to obtain sensual pleasures. (16.12)

*idam adya mayā labdham imam prāpsyē manoratham
idam astīdam api me bhaviṣyati punar dhanam*

[Those of ungodly disposition think as follows:]; *idam*—this; *labdham*—has been secured; *mayā*—by me; *adya*—today; *prāpsyē*—[and] I shall fulfill; *imam*—this; *manah-ratham*—heart longing; *idam*—this [wealth]; *asti*—is [mine]; *punaḥ*—[and] additionally; *idam*—this [other]; *dhanam*—wealth; *api*—too; *bhaviṣyati*—will be; *me*—mine.

Those of ungodly disposition think as follows: “I have secured this much today, and I shall fulfill this heart longing. This wealth is mine, and this other wealth shall also be mine.” (16.13)

*asau mayā hataḥ śatrur haniṣye cāparān api
īśvaro ’ham aham bhogī siddho ’ham balavān sukhī*

asau—that; *śatruḥ*—enemy; *hataḥ*—has been killed; *mayā*—by me; *ca*—and; *haniṣye*—I shall kill; *aparān*—the other [enemies]; *api*—also; *aham*—I [am]; *īśvaraḥ*—the controller; *aham*—I [am]; *bhogī*—the enjoyer; *aham*—I [am]; *siddhaḥ*—perfect; *balavān*—powerful; *sukhī*—[and] happy.

“I have killed that enemy and I shall kill the others also. I am the controller, I am the enjoyer, I am perfect, powerful, and happy.” (16.14)

*āḍhyo 'bhijanavān asmi ko 'nyo 'sti sadṛśo mayā
yakṣye dāsyāmi modiṣya ity ajñāna-vimohitāḥ*

vimohitāḥ — deluded; *ajñāna* — by ignorance; *iti* — [they think] as follows; *asmi* — I am; *āḍhyaḥ* — rich; *abhijanavān* — [and] of noble birth; *kaḥ* — who; *anyaḥ* — else; *asti* — is there; *sadṛśaḥ* — equal; *mayā* — to me; *yakṣye* — I shall perform sacrifice; *dāsyāmi* — I shall donate charity; *modiṣye* — [and] I shall rejoice.

Deluded by ignorance, they think as follows: “I am rich and of noble birth. Who else is there equal to me? I will perform yajñas, donate charity, and rejoice.” (16.15)

*aneka-citta-vibhrāntā moha-jāla-samāvṛtāḥ
prasaktāḥ kāma-bhogeṣu patanti narake 'śucau*

vibhrāntāḥ — being confused; *aneka-citta* — by excessive mentation; *samāvṛtāḥ* — being covered; *jāla* — [by] the net; *moha* — [of] delusion; *prasaktāḥ* — [and] addicted; *kāma-bhogeṣu* — to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures; *patanti* — they fall down; *aśucau* — into a vicious; *narake* — hell.

Being confused by excessive mentation, caught in the net of delusion, and addicted to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, they fall into a vicious hell. (16.16)

*ātma-sambhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhana-māna-madānvitāḥ
yajante nāma-yajñais te dambhenāvidhi-pūrvakam*

ātma-sambhāvitāḥ — self-conceited; *stabdhāḥ* — arrogant; *anvitāḥ* — [and] intoxicated; *dhana* — [by] wealth; *māna* — honor; *mada* — [and] pride; *te* — they; *yajante* — worship; *nāma-yajñaiḥ* — through mere nominal sacrifice; *dambhena* — out of

show; *avidhi-pūrvakam* — without adhering to any prescribed process.

Self-conceited, arrogant, and intoxicated by wealth, honor, and pride, they perform *yajña* in name only, just for show without adhering to any prescribed process. (16.17)

*ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ ca saṁśritāḥ
mām ātma-para-deheṣu pradviṣanto 'bhyasūyakāḥ*

saṁśritāḥ — resorting exclusively; *ahaṅkāraṁ* — to egotism; *balaṁ* — strength; *darpaṁ* — insolence; *kāmaṁ* — lust; *ca* — and; *krodhaṁ* — anger; *abhyasūyakāḥ* — [the ungodly] who are indignant [even toward the virtues of the saintly]; *pradviṣantaḥ* — despise; *mām* — Me; *deheṣu* — [situated] in the bodies; *ātma* — of their own self; *para* — [and] of others.

Resorting exclusively to egotism, strength, insolence, lust, and anger, the ungodly, who are indignant even toward the virtues of the saintly, despise Me, who am situated in their own bodies and those of others. (16.18)

*tān ahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān saṁsāreṣu narādhamān
kṣipāmy ajasram aśubhān āsurīṣv eva yoniṣu*

ahaṁ — I; *ajasram* — perpetually; *kṣipāmi* — hurl; *tān* — them; *dviṣataḥ* — [these] vicious; *krūrān* — cruel; *aśubhān* — inauspicious; *nara-adhamān* — [and] most degraded among men; *asurīṣu* — into demonic; *yoniṣu eva* — species only; *saṁsāreṣu* — [to revolve] in the cycle of birth and death.

I perpetually hurl these vicious, cruel, inauspicious, and most degraded among men into demonic species only, to revolve in the cycle of birth and death. (16.19)

*āsurīm yonim āpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani
mām aprāpyaiva kaunteya tato yānti adhamām gatim*

kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; *āpannāḥ*—attaining; *janmani janmani*—repeated birth; *āsurīm*—in demonic; *yonim*—species; *mūḍhāḥ*—such fools; *aprāpya eva*—certainly not attaining; *mām*—Me; *yānti*—sink down; *tataḥ*—instead; *adhamām*—to lower; *gatim*—birth.

O son of Kuntī, attaining repeated birth in demonic species, such fools certainly do not attain Me and sink down instead to still lower birth. (16.20)

*tri-vidham narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ
kāmaḥ krodhaḥ tathā lobhaḥ tasmād etat trayam tyajet*

kāmaḥ—desire; *krodhaḥ*—anger; *tathā*—and; *lobhaḥ*—greed; *idam*—this; *tri-vidham*—[is] the threefold; *dvāram*—gate; *narakasya*—to hell; *nāśanam*—[bringing] ruination; *ātmanaḥ*—to the self; *tasmāt*—therefore; *etat*—these; *trayam*—three; *tyajet*—should be shunned.

Desire, anger, and greed—this is the threefold gate to hell that brings ruination to the self. Therefore, these three should be shunned. (16.21)

*etair vimuktaḥ kaunteya tamo-dvārais tribhir naraḥ
ācaraty ātmanaḥ śreyas tato yāti parām gatim*

kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; *naraḥ*—a person; *vimuktaḥ*—freed; *etair*—from these; *tribhiḥ*—three; *tamaḥ-dvāraiḥ*—gates to darkness; *ācarati*—acts; *śreyas*—[for] the welfare; *ātmanaḥ*—of the self; *tataḥ*—[and] thereafter; *yāti*—attains; *parām*—the supreme; *gatim*—goal.

O son of Kuntī, a person freed from the influence of these three gates to darkness acts for the welfare of the self and thus attains the supreme goal. (16.22)

*yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya vartate kāma-kārataḥ
na sa siddhim avāpnoti na sukham na parām gatim*

yaḥ—one who; *utsṛjya*—casting aside; *śāstra-vidhim*—the ordinances of scriptures; *vartate*—acts [instead]; *kāma-kārataḥ*—under the impulse of material desire; *saḥ*—he; *avāpnoti*—attains; *na siddhim*—neither perfection; *na sukham*—nor contentment; *na*—nor; *parām*—the supreme; *gatim*—goal.

One who casts aside the ordinances of scriptures and who acts instead under the impulse of material desire, attains neither perfection, nor contentment, nor the supreme goal. (16.23)

*tasmāc chāstram pramāṇam te kāryākārya-vyavasthitau
jñātvā śāstra-vidhānoktam karma kartum ihārhasi*

tasmāt—therefore; *śāstram*—scriptural revelation; *pramāṇam*—[is] the means of authentic knowing; *te*—[available] to you; *vyavasthitau*—in ascertaining; *kārya*—what is to be done; *akārya*—[and] what is to be avoided; *arhasi*—you are meant [i.e., you should]; *kartum*—to act; *iha*—in this world; *jñātvā*—[only] on acquaintance with; *karma*—action; *uktam*—as described; *vidhāna*—[according to] the prescriptions; *śāstra*—[of] scripture.

Therefore, scriptural revelation is the means of authentic knowing available to you in ascertaining what is to be done and what is to be avoided. You should act in this world only

on acquaintance with action as described according to the prescriptions of scripture. (16.24)



CHAPTER 17

THE PATH OF RECOGNITION OF THREE KINDS OF FAITH ŚRADDHA-TRAYA-VIBHĀGA-YOGA

There are twenty-eight verses in this chapter, one spoken by Arjuna and twenty-seven spoken by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the previous chapter, Kṛṣṇa declared that anyone who does not follow the ordinances of scripture and acts in an arbitrary way according to his or her own whim, attains neither perfection, nor contentment, nor the supreme goal. Arjuna assumed that only a few people were actually familiar with those ordinances. The rest worshiped according to their family tradition, social order (*āśrama*), innate faith, and so on.

Kṛṣṇa explained that, on the one hand, due to their disregard for the ordinances of the scriptures, they should be considered as ungodly, yet on the other hand, their faith should qualify them to be considered among those of the divine nature. With this in mind, Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa about the different kinds of faith (1). Bhagavān replies by describing three kinds of faith that are in accordance with a person's previously acquired nature (2). He explains that faith can be recognized by observing a person's object of worship, the nature of the penances he performs, the food he eats, the type of *yajña* he performs, and the charity he offers (5–22). After this, Kṛṣṇa explains the threefold appellation of Brahman, Om, Tat, and Sat, in the actions of sacrifice (*yajña*), charity, and penance (23–27). He concludes by saying that any sacrifice, charity, or penance performed without faith bears no fruit, either in this world or after death (28).

arjuna uvāca

*ye śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna inquired; *kṛṣṇa* — O Kṛṣṇa; *kā* — what is; *niṣṭhā* — the conviction; *teṣāṁ* — of those; *ye* — who; *tu* — although; *anvitāḥ* — endowed; *śraddhayā* — with faith; *yajante* — engage in worship; *utsṛjya* — while setting aside; *śāstra-vidhim* — the injunctions of scripture; *sattvam* — [is it of the nature of] *sattva*; *rajaḥ* — *rajas*; *āho* — or; *tamaḥ* — *tamas*.

Arjuna inquired: O Kṛṣṇa, what is the conviction of those who, although endowed with faith, engage in worship while setting aside the injunctions of scripture? Is it of the nature of *sattva*, *rajas*, or *tamas*? (17.1)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*tri-vidhā bhavati śraddhā dehināṁ sā svabhāva-jā
sāttvikī rājasī caiva tāmasī ceti tām śṛṇu*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — Śrī Bhagavān replied; *śraddhā* — the faith; *dehinām* — of embodied beings; *bhavati* — is; *tri-vidhā* — of three types; *iti* — namely; *sāttvikī* — *sāttvika*; *ca eva* — and; *rājasī* — *rājasika*; *ca* — and; *tāmasī* — *tāmasika*; *sā* — such faith; *sva-bhāva-jā* — is born of one's previously acquired nature; *śṛṇu* — [now] hear; *tām* — about this.

Śrī Bhagavān replied: The faith of embodied beings is of three types, namely, *sāttvika*, *rājasika*, and *tāmasika*. Such faith is born of one's previously acquired nature. Now hear about this. (17.2)

*sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata
śraddhā-mayo 'yaṁ puruṣo yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*

bhārata—O descendant of Bharata; *sarvasya*—everyone's; *śraddhā*—faith; *bhavati*—is; *sattva-anurūpā*—according to their individual psychological make-up; *ayam*—this; *puruṣaḥ*—empirical self; *śraddhā-mayaḥ*—[is in fact] a by-product of faith [*śraddhā-vikāra*]; [therefore]; *yaḥ*—one who [demonstrates]; *yat-śraddhaḥ*—whatever faith; *saḥ*—he; *saḥ eva*—[is] exactly of that faith.

O descendant of Bharata, everyone's faith is according to their individual psychological make-up. The empirical self is in fact a by-product of faith. Therefore, whatever faith a person demonstrates is exactly the faith with which he is endowed. (17.3)

*yajante sāttvikā devān yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ
pretān bhūta-gaṇāṁś cānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ*

sāttvikāḥ—those who have a *sāttvika* disposition; *yajante*—worship; *devān*—the *devas*; *rājasāḥ*—those with a *rājasika* disposition; *yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi*—[worship] the *yakṣas* and *rākṣasas*; *anye*—[whereas] other; *janāḥ*—people; *tāmasāḥ*—of *tāmasika* disposition; *yajante*—worship; *pretān*—ghosts; *ca*—and; *bhūta-gaṇān*—evil spirits.

Those who have a *sāttvika* disposition worship the *devas*, those with a *rājasika* disposition worship the *yakṣas* and *rākṣasas*,¹ whereas other people of *tāmasika* disposition worship ghosts and evil spirits. (17.4)

*aśāstra-vihitaṁ ghoram tapyante ye tapo janāḥ
dambhāhaṅkāra-saṁyuktāḥ kāma-rāga-balānvitāḥ*

*karṣayantaḥ śarīra-sthaṁ bhūta-grāmam acetasaḥ
mām caivāntaḥ śarīra-sthaṁ tān viddhy āsura-niścayān*

ye—those; *janāḥ*—persons; *saṁyuktāḥ*—who are fraught; *dambha*—[with] ostentation; *ahaṅkāra*—[and] egotism; *anvitāḥ*—[and] who are impelled; *kāma*—[by] desire; *rāga*—attachment; *bala*—[and] virility; *tapyante*—perform; *ghoram*—terrible; *tapāḥ*—austerities; *aśāstra-vihitam*—not approved in the scriptures; *acetasaḥ*—being bereft of discrimination; *karṣayantaḥ*—they torture; *bhūta-grāmam*—the elements; *śarīra-sthaṁ*—constituting the body; *ca*—and; *mām eva*—Me indeed; *antaḥ śarīra-sthaṁ*—situated interior to the body; *viddhi*—know; *tān*—them; *āsura-niścayān*—to be of ungodly resolve.

Those persons who are fraught with ostentation and egotism, and who are impelled by desire, attachment, and virility, perform terrible austerities not approved by the scriptures. Being bereft of discrimination, they torture the elements constituting their bodies as well as Me situated interior to the body. Know them to be of ungodly resolve. (17.5–6)

*āhāras tv api sarvasya tri-vidho bhavati priyaḥ
yajñas tapas tathā dānam teṣāṁ bhedaṁ imaṁ śṛṇu*

āhāraḥ—the food; *tu api*—as well; *priyaḥ*—preferred; *sarvasya*—by everyone; *bhavati*—is; *tri-vidhaḥ*—of three types; [as are their]; *yajñaḥ*—sacrifice; *tapas*—austerity; *tathā*—and; *dānam*—charity; *śṛṇu*—please hear about; *imaṁ*—this; *bhedam*—division; *teṣāṁ*—of these items.

The food which people prefer is also of three types, as are their sacrifice, austerity, and charity. Please hear about the divisions of these items. (17.7)

*āyuh-sattva-balārogya-sukha-prīti-vivardhanāḥ
rasyāḥ snigdhāḥ sthirā hr̥dyā āhārāḥ sāttvika-priyāḥ*

āhārāḥ — foods; *vivardhanāḥ* — that increase; *āyuh* — longevity; *sattva* — enthusiasm; *bala* — strength; *ārogya* — health; *sukha* — happiness; *prīti* — [and] satisfaction; *rasyāḥ* — [and that are] savory; *snigdhāḥ* — fatty; *sthirāḥ* — wholesome; *hr̥dyāḥ* — [and] pleasing to the heart; *sāttvika-priyāḥ* — [are] dear to people who are influenced primarily by *sattva*.

Foods that increase longevity, enthusiasm, strength, health, happiness, and satisfaction, and that are savory, fatty, wholesome, and pleasing to the heart are dear to people who are influenced primarily by *sattva*. (17.8)

*kaṭv-amlā-lavaṇāty-uṣṇa-tīkṣṇa-rūkṣa-vidāhinaḥ
āhārā rājasasyeṣṭhā duḥkha-śokāmaya-pradāḥ*

āhārāḥ — foods [that are]; *kaṭu* — [too] bitter; *amla* — sour; *lavaṇa* — salty; *ati-uṣṇa* — excessively hot; *tīkṣṇa* — pungent; *rūkṣa* — dry; *vidāhinaḥ* — [and] burning; *pradāḥ* — [and which] cause; *duḥkha* — suffering; *śoka* — grief; *āmaya* — [and] disease; *iṣṭhāḥ* — [are] dear; *rājasasya* — to people who are influenced primarily by *rajas*.

Foods that are too bitter, sour, salty, excessively hot, pungent, dry, and burning, and which cause suffering, grief, and disease, are dear to people who are influenced primarily by *rajas*. (17.9)

*yāta-yāmaṁ gata-rasaṁ pūti paryuṣitaṁ ca yat
ucchiṣṭaṁ api cāmedhyaṁ bhojanaṁ tāmasa-priyam*

bhojanam—food; *yat*—which [is]; *yāta-yāmam*—old [i.e., cooked more than three hours before being eaten]; *gata-rasam*—insipid; *pūti*—putrid; *paryuṣitam*—stale; *ca api*—and even; *ucchiṣṭam*—leftover from someone else; *ca*—and; *amedhyam*—impure; *tāmasa-priyam*—[is] dear to people who are influenced primarily by *tamas*.

Food that is old [cooked more than three hours before being eaten], insipid, putrid, stale, leftover from someone else, and impure, is dear to people who are influenced primarily by *tamas*. (17.10)

*aphalākāṅkṣibhir yajño vidhi-diṣṭo ya ijjate
yaṣṭavyam eveti manaḥ samādhāya sa sāttvikah*

saḥ—that; *yajñaḥ*—*yajña*; *yaḥ*—which; *ijjate*—is performed; *vidhi-diṣṭaḥ*—according to scriptural injunctions; *aphalākāṅkṣibhiḥ*—by those without desire for material benefit; *samādhāya*—having fixed; *manaḥ*—the mind; *iti*—thus [i.e., with the understanding]; *yaṣṭavyam eva*—that *yajña* must certainly be performed as a duty; *sāttvikah*—[is] of the nature of *sattva*.

That *yajña* which is performed according to scriptural injunctions by those without desire for material benefit, who have fixed their minds with the understanding that *yajña* must certainly be performed as a duty, is of the nature of *sattva*. (17.11)

*abhisandhāya tu phalaṁ dambhārtham api caiva yat
ijjate bharata-śreṣṭha taṁ yajñam viddhi rājasam*

tu—but; *bharata-śreṣṭha*—O best of the Bharatas; *viddhi*—know; *taṁ*—that; *yajñam*—*yajña*; *yat*—which; *ijjate*—is

performed; *abhisandhāya*—[by those] expecting; *phalam*—results; *api eva ca*—and merely; *dambha-artham*—for the purpose of show; *rājasam*—to be of the nature of *rajas*.

But, O best of the Bharatas, know that *yajña* which is performed by those expecting results and merely as a matter of show to be of the nature of *rajas*. (17.12)

*vidhi-hīnam asṛṣṭānnaṁ mantra-hīnam adakṣiṇam
śraddhā-virahitaṁ yajñaṁ tāmasaṁ paricakṣate*

yajñam—[that] *yajña*; *vidhi-hīnam*—[which] neglects scriptural injunctions; *asṛṣṭa-annam*—[which is] without distribution of food; *mantra-hīnam*—without chanting appropriate *mantras*; *adakṣiṇam*—without gifts to the priests; *śraddhā-virahitam*—[and] without faith; *paricakṣate*—is said to be; *tāmasam*—of the nature of *tamas*.

That *yajña* which neglects scriptural injunctions, in which no food is distributed, no *mantras* are chanted, no gifts are offered to the priests, and that is performed without faith, is said to be of the nature of *tamas*. (17.13)

*deva-dvija-guru-prājña-pūjanam śaucam ārjavam
brahmacaryam ahimsā ca śārīram tapa ucyate*

pūjanam—worship; *deva*—[of] the *devas*; *dvija*—the qualified *brāhmaṇas*; *guru*—teachers [and/or elders]; *prājña*—[and] enlightened beings; *śaucam*—[as well as] purity; *ārjavam*—simplicity; *brahmacaryam*—continence; *ca*—and; *ahimsā*—non-violence; *ucyate*—is said to be; *tapaḥ*—austerity; *śārīram*—related to the body.

Worship of the *devas*, the *brāhmaṇas*, teachers, and enlightened beings, as well as purity, simplicity, continence, and non-violence, are said to be austerities related to the body. (17.14)

*anudvega-karam vākyam
satyam priya-hitam ca yat
svādhyāyābhyasanam caiva
vāñ-mayam tapa ucyate*

vākyam — speech; *yat* — which [is]; *anudvega-karam* — not annoying to others; *satyam* — truthful; *priya* — pleasing; *ca* — and; *hitam* — beneficial; *ca eva* — and indeed; *abhyasanam* — regular practice; *svādhyāya* — [of] the study and recitation of the Vedas; *ucyate* — is said to be; *tapah* — austerity; *vāk-mayam* — related to speech.

Speech that is not annoying to others, that is truthful, pleasing, and beneficial, as well as the regular study and recitation of the Vedas, is said to be the austerity of speech. (17.15)

*manah-prasādaḥ saumyatvam maunam ātma-vinigrahaḥ
bhāva-saṁśuddhir iti etat tapo mānasam ucyate*

manah-prasādaḥ — serenity of mind; *saumyatvam* — sobriety; *maunam* — silent contemplation; *ātma-vinigrahaḥ* — self-restraint; *saṁśuddhiḥ* — [and] purity; *bhāva* — [of] awareness; *iti etat* — all these; *ucyate* — are said to be; *tapah* — austerity; *mānasam* — of the mind.

Serenity of mind, sobriety, silent contemplation, self-restraint, and purity of awareness — all these are said to be austerity of the mind. (17.16)

*śraddhayā parayā taptam tapas tat tri-vidham naraiḥ
aphalākāṅkṣibhir yuktaiḥ sāttvikam paricakṣate*

tat—that; *tri-vidham*—threefold; *tapah*—austerity; *taptam*—performed; *parayā*—with supreme; *śraddhayā*—faith; *naraiḥ*—by people; *yuktaiḥ*—who are steadfast; *aphala-ākāṅkṣibhiḥ*—[and] without desire for material gain; *paricakṣate*—is said to be; *sāttvikam*—of the nature of *sattva*.

This threefold austerity [of body, speech, and mind], performed with supreme faith by people who are steadfast and without desire for material gain, is said to be of the nature of *sattva*. (17.17)

*satkāra-māna-pūjārtham tapo dambhena caiva yat
kriyate tad iha proktam rājasam calam adhruvam*

tat—that; *tapah*—austerity; *yat*—which; *kriyate*—is undertaken; *artham*—solely for the purpose of; *satkāra*—self-glorification; *māna*—honor; *pūjā*—[and] worship; *ca eva*—and moreover; *dambhena*—with ostentation; *calam*—[and which is] flickering; *adhruvam*—[and] transitory; *proktam*—is declared; *iha*—in this world; *rājasam*—to be of the nature of *rajas*.

That austerity which is undertaken solely for the purpose of self-glorification, honor, and worship, which is performed with ostentation, and which is flickering and transitory, is declared in this world to be of the nature of *rajas*. (17.18)

*mūḍha-grāheṇātmano yat pīḍayā kriyate tapah
parasyotsādanārtham vā tat tāmasam udāhṛtam*

tat—that; *tapah*—austerity; *yat*—which; *kriyate*—is performed; *mūḍha-grāheṇa*—out of a foolish whim; *pīḍayā*—with torture; *ātmanaḥ*—of one's own self; *vā*—or; *utsādana-artham*—for the destruction; *parasya*—of others; *udāhṛtam*—is said to be; *tāmasam*—of the nature of *tamas*.

That austerity which is performed out of a foolish whim, with self-torture, or for the destruction of others, is said to be of the nature of *tamas*. (17.19)

*dātavyam iti yad dānam dīyate 'nupakāriṇe
deśe kāle ca pātre ca tad dānam sātṭvikam smṛtam*

dānam—charity; *yat*—which; *dīyate*—is given; *dātavyam*—as a matter of duty; *anupakāriṇe*—without any expectation of return; *ca*—and; *iti*—thus [in due consideration]; *deśe*—of the appropriate place; *kāle*—of the suitable time; *ca*—and; *pātre*—of the worthiness of the recipient; *tat*—that; *dānam*—charity; *smṛtam*—is considered; *sātṭvikam*—to be of the nature of *sattva*.

Charity given as a matter of duty, without any expectation of return, and in due consideration of the appropriate place, the suitable time, and the worthiness of the recipient is considered to be of the nature of *sattva*. (17.20)

*yat tu pratyupakārārtham phalam uddīśya vā punaḥ
dīyate ca parikliṣṭam tad dānam rājasam smṛtam*

tu—but; *tat*—that; *dānam*—charity; *yat*—which; *dīyate*—is given; *prati-upakāra-artham*—with the expectation of receiving a favor in return; *vā*—or; *uddīśya*—in anticipation; *phalam*—[of] the fruit; *punaḥ ca*—and moreover; *parikliṣṭam*

—[which is handed over] begrudgingly; *smṛtam*—is considered; *rājasam*—to be of the nature of *rajas*.

But charity given with the expectation of receiving a favor in return or in anticipation of the fruit, and moreover which is handed over begrudgingly is of the nature of *rajas*. (17.21)

*adeśa-kāle yat dānam apātrebhyaś ca dīyate
asat-kṛtam avajñātam tat tāmasam udāhṛtam*

tat—that; *dānam*—charity; *yat*—which; *dīyate*—is given; *adeśa-kāle*—at an inappropriate place and time; *apātrebhyaḥ*—to unworthy recipients; *asat-kṛtam*—without respect; *ca*—and; *avajñātam*—disdainfully; *udāhṛtam*—is said to be; *tāmasam*—of the nature of *tamas*.

Charity given at an inappropriate place and time, to unworthy recipients, without respect and disdainfully, is said to be of the nature of *tamas*. (17.22)

*om tat sat iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas tri-vidhaḥ smṛtaḥ
brāhmaṇās tena vedāś ca yajñāś ca vihitāḥ purā*

om tat sat iti—the words Om, Tat, and Sat; *smṛtaḥ*—are called; *tri-vidhaḥ*—the threefold; *nirdeśaḥ*—appellation; *brahmaṇaḥ*—of Brahman; *tena*—[it is] out of these [three words]; *brāhmaṇāḥ*—[that] the *brāhmaṇas*; *ca*—and; *vedāḥ*—the Vedas; *ca*—and; *yajñāḥ*—sacrifices; *vihitāḥ*—were originated; *purā*—in former times.

The words Om, Tat, and Sat are called the threefold appellation of Brahman, the Absolute Truth. It is out of these three words that the *brāhmaṇas*, the Vedas, and sacrifices were originated in the days of yore. (17.23)

*tasmād om ity udāhṛtya yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ
pravartante vidhānuktāḥ satatam brahma-vādinām*

tasmāt—therefore; *kriyāḥ*—the acts; *yajña*—[of] sacrifice; *dāna*—charity; *tapaḥ*—[and] austerity; *vidhāna-uktāḥ*—ordained by the scriptures; *brahma-vādinām*—[that are undertaken] by the followers of the Vedas; *satatam*—[are] always; *pravartante*—performed; *udāhṛtya*—[preceded by] the recitation; *om iti*—of the sacred syllable Om̐.

Therefore, the acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity ordained by the scriptures that are undertaken by the followers of the Vedas are always preceded by the recitation of the sacred syllable Om̐. (17.24)

*tad ity anabhisandhāya phalam yajña-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ
dāna-kriyāś ca vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ*

vividhāḥ—the various; *kriyāḥ*—acts; *yajña*—[of] sacrifice; *tapaḥ*—[and] austerity; *ca*—as well as; *kriyāḥ*—acts; *dāna*—[of] charity; *kriyante*—are performed; *mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ*—by the seekers of liberation; *anabhisandhāya*—without anticipating; *phalam*—any reward; *tad iti*—[while uttering] the word Tat.

The various acts of sacrifice and austerity, as well as acts of charity, are performed by the seekers of liberation without anticipating any reward while uttering the word Tat. (17.25)

*sad-bhāve sādhu-bhāve ca sad ity etat prayujyate
praśaste karmaṇi tathā sac-chabdaḥ pārtha yujyate*

etat—this; *sat iti*—word Sat; *prayujyate*—is used; *sat-bhāve*—to indicate the Absolute; *ca*—and; *sādhu-bhāve*—to indicate

the worshipers of the Absolute; *tathā* — similarly; *sat-śabdaḥ* — the word Sat; *yujyate* — is employed; [in the performance]; *praśaste* — [of] auspicious; *karmaṇi* — acts; *pārtha* — O son of Pṛthā.

The word Sat is used to indicate the Absolute as well as the worshipers of the Absolute. Similarly, the word Sat is employed in the performance of auspicious acts, O Arjuna. (17.26)

*yaज्ञे tapasi दाने च स्थितिं सद इति कोच्यते
कर्मा चावा तद-अर्थीयम् सद इत्येवाभ्युहित्यते*

sthitih — steadiness; *yaज्ञे* — in sacrifice; *tapasi* — in austerity; *ca* — and; *dāne* — in charity; *ucyate ca* — is also called; *sat iti* — by the word Sat; *ca* — and; *eva* — indeed; *karma* — action; *tat-arthīyam* — [performed] for the sake of the Absolute; *abhidhīyate eva* — is verily termed; *sat iti* — by the word Sat.

Steadiness in sacrifice, austerity, and charity is also called Sat, and indeed action performed for the sake of the Absolute is verily termed Sat. (17.27)

*aśraddhayā hutam dattam tapas taptam kṛtam ca yat
asad ity ucyate pārtha na ca tat pretya no iha*

pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *yat* — whatever; *hutam* — is offered in the sacrificial fire; *dattam* — [whatever] is given in charity; *tapas* — [whatever] austerity; *taptam* — is undertaken; *ca* — and; *kṛtam* — [whatever other auspicious action] is performed; *aśraddhayā* — without faith; *ucyate* — is termed; *iti* — thus; *asad* — as *asad* [i.e., as worthless]; *tat* — such [action]; [bears no fruit]; *no* — neither; *iha* — in this world; *na ca* — nor; *pretya* — in the next.

O son of Prthā, whatever is offered in the sacrificial fire, whatever is given in charity, whatever austerity is undertaken, and whatever other auspicious actions are performed without faith, are all termed as *asat*, or worthless, because they bear no fruit, neither here nor after death. (17.28)



1. *Yakṣas* and *rākṣasas* are types of semi-celestial beings below the class of the *devas*. *Yakṣas* are associates of Kubera, the god of wealth. *Rākṣasas* are also known as man-eaters.

CHAPTER 18

THE PATH OF LIBERATION

MOKṢA-YOGA

In the second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke of *karma-yoga* (the path of selfless action) in contrast with *sāṅkhya-yoga* (the path of analytic knowledge). In the first two verses of the sixth chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said that one who performs his prescribed duties without attachment to the fruit is both a *sannyāsī* (a *jñāna-yogī*) and a *yogī* (a *karma-yogī*). He reiterated the fact that what is called *sannyāsa* (*jñāna-yoga*) is the same as *yoga* (*karma-yoga*). It appears that Arjuna was still not clear what exactly *sannyāsa* means. Therefore, at the beginning of this chapter, Arjuna poses a question to Kṛṣṇa about the essential principle of *sannyāsa*. In response to this, Kṛṣṇa speaks the eighteenth chapter, wherein He summarizes all three kinds of *yoga*.

There are seventy-eight verses in this final chapter, two spoken by Arjuna, five by Sañjaya, and seventy-one by Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa explains that one should not abandon one's duties but perform them instead without any material motive. He does not recommend total abnegation of action. *Yajña*, charity, and penance should be performed by all. Real renunciation means to give up the fruits of one's actions. Action has three types of results, but these accrue only to those who are attached to the results (2–12).

Kṛṣṇa then describes the five causes behind all action (13–15). One who considers himself as the sole cause without considering the other four factors is bereft of proper

discrimination, whereas one who is devoid of the sense of doership, remains untainted by the actions he performs (16–17).

Kṛṣṇa next explains the three divisions of knowledge, action, and agency (19–28). He delineates three divisions of intelligence and three divisions of determination (30–35). Then He defines three types of happiness (37–39). He further speaks about the duties of *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras*—members of the *varṇāśrama-dharma* society (41–44). He advises that one should remain engaged in one's prescribed duties, which will lead to perfection. One should never abandon one's own duty and take to another's duties. All actions are inevitably attended by some imperfection. One should therefore remain engaged in action without attachment, for the attainment of perfection (45–49). This comprises a detailed explanation of the path of action.

In the next six verses, Kṛṣṇa outlines the path of *jñāna* (50–55). Then He again recommends the performance of *karma-yoga* imbued with devotion to God and taking complete shelter of Him (57). He impresses on Arjuna that if out of the separatist ego-sense he abandons his duty, he will become a failure and ultimately be impelled to act in any case according to his acquired nature. Kṛṣṇa, therefore, recommends that Arjuna take shelter of the almighty God and perform his duty. He concludes His instructions and advises Arjuna to deliberate on them and then make his own choice (58–63).

Seeing Arjuna remaining silent while gazing at Him full of devotion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, overpowered by compassion for His friend and devotee, reveals His final conclusion. He again beseeches Arjuna to become His devotee and take full shelter of Him

alone (65–66). These two verses contain the complete essence of *Bhagavad Gītā*.

In the next verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the people who are unfit to hear this dialogue (67). Then He pronounces the benefits of teaching and studying the *Gītā* (68–71). Finally, He asks Arjuna if he has understood the message properly (72). If not, He is ready to speak further. Arjuna responds affirmatively, which is where the dialogue between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa comes to an end (73).

Saṅjaya concludes his recitation to Dhṛtarāṣṭra by expressing great wonder and jubilation at having heard this wonderful dialogue and at having seen the most amazing cosmic form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He declares that wherever Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are present, there will surely be opulence, victory, and morality (74–78).

arjuna uvāca

sannyāsasya mahā-bāho tattvam icchāmi veditum

tyāgasya ca hr̥ṣīkeśa pr̥thak keśi-niṣūdana

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed one; *hr̥ṣīkeśa*—O master of the senses; *keśi-niṣūdana*—O slayer of [the demon] Keśi; *icchāmi*—I wish; *veditum*—to know; *pr̥thak*—discriminatively; *tattvam*—the truth; *sannyāsasya*—regarding renunciation; *ca*—and; *tyāgasya*—regarding relinquishment.

Arjuna said: O Mighty-Armed, O Master of the senses, O Slayer of Keśi, I wish to know discriminatively the truth regarding renunciation (*sannyāsa*) and relinquishment (*tyāga*). (18.1)

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

kāmyānām karmaṇām nyāsam sannyāsam kavayo viduḥ

sarva-karma-phala-tyāgam prāhuḥ tyāgam vicakṣaṇāḥ

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *vicakṣaṇāḥ*—enlightened; *kavayaḥ*—sages; *viduḥ*—recognize; *nyāsam*—the abandonment; *kāmyānām karmaṇām*—of all fruitive actions; *sannyāsam*—as *sannyāsa*; *prāhuḥ*—[whereas] they describe; *tyāgam*—the renunciation; *phala*—[of] the fruits; *sarva*—[of] all; *karma*—actions; *tyāgam*—as *tyāga*.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Enlightened sages recognize the abandonment of all fruitive actions as *sannyāsa*, whereas they describe the renunciation of the fruits of all actions as *tyāga*. (18.2)

*tyājyaṃ doṣa-vad ity eke karma prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ
yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma na tyājyaṃ iti cāpare*

eke — some; *manīṣiṇaḥ* — thinkers [of the Sāṅkhya School]; *prāhuḥ* — assert; *karma* — [that all] action [whatsoever]; *tyājyaṃ* — should be given up; *doṣa-vat iti* — as a vice; *ca* — whereas; *apare* — other thinkers [of the Mīmāṃsa School]; *iti* — [claim] thus; *karma* — [that] acts; *yajña* — [of] sacrifice; *dāna* — charity; *tapaḥ* — [and] austerity; *na tyājyaṃ* — are never to be given up.

Some thinkers [of the Sāṅkhya School] assert that all actions whatsoever should be given up as a vice, whereas other thinkers [of the Mīmāṃsa School] claim that acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity are never to be given up. (18.3)

*niścayaṃ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge bharata-sattama
tyāgo hi puruṣa-vyāghra tri-vidhaḥ samprakīrtitaḥ*

bharata-sat-tama — O best of the Bharata dynasty; *śṛṇu* — please hear; *me* — My; *niścayaṃ* — definitive [view]; *tatra* — in the matter [i.e., regarding]; *tyāge* — of *tyāga*; *puruṣa-vyāghra* — O tiger among human beings; *tyāgaḥ* — *tyāga*; *hi* — indeed; *samprakīrtitaḥ* — is said to be; *tri-vidhaḥ* — of three types.

O best of the Bharata dynasty, please hear My definitive view regarding *tyāga*. O tiger among human beings, *tyāga* is said to be of three types [in verses 7–9]. (18.4)

*yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma na tyājyaṃ kāryaṃ eva tat
yajño dānaṃ tapaś caiva pāvanāni manīṣiṇām*

karma — acts; *yajña* — [of] sacrifice; *dāna* — charity; *tapaḥ* — [and] austerity; *na tyājyaṃ* — are never to be given up; *tat* — [all]

these; *kāryam eva*—must indeed be performed; [because]; *yajñah*—sacrifice; *dānam*—charity; *ca*—and; *tapah*—austerity; *eva*—certainly; *pāvanāni*—[are] purifiers; *manīṣiṇām*—of the wise.

Acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity should never be given up. They must indeed be performed, because sacrifice, charity, and austerity certainly purify even the wise. (18.5)

*etāny api tu karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā phalāni ca
kartavyānīti me pārtha niścitaṁ matam uttamam*

pārtha—O son of Pṛthā; *etāni api*—even these; *karmāṇi*—actions; *tu*—however; *kartavyāni*—should be performed; *tyaktvā*—while giving up; *saṅgam*—attachment [to the sense of doership]; *ca*—and; *phalāni*—[all expectations of] results; *iti*—this; *me*—[is] My; *niścitaṁ*—definitive; *uttamam*—[and] ultimate; *matam*—opinion.

O Pārtha, even these [three] actions, however, should be performed without any attachment [to the sense of doership] or desire for results. This is My definitive and ultimate opinion. (18.6)

*niyatasya tu sannyāsaḥ karmaṇo nopapadyate
mohāt tasya parityāgas tāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ*

sannyāsaḥ—renunciation; *niyatasya*—of prescribed; *karmaṇaḥ*—duty; *tu*—however; *na upapadyate*—is not appropriate; *parityāgaḥ*—renunciation; *tasya*—of it; *mohāt*—out of delusion; *parikīrtitaḥ*—is stated; *tāmasaḥ*—to be an act of *tamas*.

The renunciation of prescribed duty, however, is inappropriate. To renounce it out of delusion is stated to be an act of *tamas*. (18.7)

*duḥkham ity eva yat karma kāya-kleśa-bhayāt tyajet
sa kṛtvā rājasam tyāgam naiva tyāga-phalam labhet*

tyajet—if one gives up; *yat*—whatsoever; *karma*—duty; *bhayāt*—out of fear; *kleśa*—[of] discomfort; *kāya*—[to] the body; *iti*—[considering] thus; *duḥkham eva*—“it is indeed painful;” *saḥ*—he; *kṛtvā*—having undertaken; *tyāgam*—such renunciation; *rājasam*—which is of the nature of *rajas*; *na labhet eva*—certainly does not obtain; *phalam*—the benefit; *tyāga*—[of] renunciation.

If one gives up one’s duty out of fear of bodily discomfort, considering it as indeed painful, then even on undertaking such renunciation, which is of the nature of *rajas*, he certainly derives no benefit from it. (18.8)

*kāryam ity eva yat karma niyatam kriyate ’rjuna
saṅgam tyaktvā phalam caiva sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ*

arjuna—O Arjuna; *yat*—whatever; *niyatam*—prescribed; *karma*—action; *kriyate*—is performed; *iti*—[considering] thus; *kāryam eva*—“it is indeed my duty;” *tyaktvā*—while giving up; *saṅgam*—attachment [to the sense of doership]; *ca*—and; *eva*—indeed; *phalam*—[the desire for] the result; *saḥ*—that; *tyāgaḥ*—renunciation; *mataḥ*—is considered; *sāttvikaḥ*—to be of the nature of *sattva*.

O Arjuna, when prescribed action is performed considering it exclusively as one’s duty, while abandoning all attachment

[to the sense of doership] and the desire for results, such *tyāga* is considered to be of the nature of *sattva*. (18.9)

*na dveṣṭy akuśalam karma kuśale nānuṣajjate
tyāgī sattva-samāviṣṭo medhāvī chinna-saṁśayaḥ*

tyāgī—the renunciate; *samāviṣṭaḥ*—who is imbued; *sattva*—[with] *sattva*; *medhāvī*—who is of fixed intellect [*sthira-buddhi*]; *chinna-saṁśayaḥ*—[and] whose doubts have been slashed; *na*—neither; *dveṣṭi*—detests; *akuśalam*—troublesome; *karma*—action; *na*—nor; *anuṣajjate*—becomes attached; *kuśale*—to pleasurable [action].

The renunciate (*tyāgī*) who is imbued with *sattva*, who is of fixed intellect, and whose doubts have been slashed, neither detests troublesome action nor becomes attached to pleasurable action. (18.10)

*na hi deha-bhṛtā śakyam
tyaktum karmāṇy aśeṣataḥ
ya tu karma-phala-tyāgī
sa tyāgīty abhidhīyate*

karmāṇi—actions; *na śakyam hi*—certainly cannot be; *tyaktum*—given up; *aśeṣataḥ*—entirely; *deha-bhṛtā*—by an embodied being; *tu*—but; *yaḥ*—one who; *tyāgī*—[is] a renouncer; *karma-phala*—[of] the fruits of action; *saḥ*—he; *abhidhīyate*—is said; *tyāgī iti*—to be a true renunciate.

Actions certainly cannot be entirely given up by an embodied being, but one who gives up the fruit of action is said to be a true renunciate. (18.11)

*aniṣṭam iṣṭam miśram ca tri-vidhaṁ karmaṇaḥ phalam
bhavaty atyāginām pretya na tu sannyāsinām kvacit*

tri-vidham — the three kinds; *phalam* — [of] results; *karmaṇaḥ* — of action; *aniṣṭam* — undesirable; *iṣṭam* — desirable; *ca* — and; *miśram* — mixed; *bhavati* — accrue; *pretya* — after death; *atyāginām* — to those who are not renounced; *tu* — but; *na kvacit* — never at any time; *sannyāsinām* — to the renunciates.

The three types of results of action — undesirable, desirable, and mixed — accrue after death to those who are not renounced, but never at any time to the renunciates. (18.12)

*pañcāitāni mahā-bāho kāraṇāni nibodha me
sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarva-karmaṇām*

mahā-bāho — O mighty-armed one; *nibodha* — learn; *me* — from Me; *etāni* — these; *pañca* — five; *kāraṇāni* — causes; *siddhaye* — [necessary] for the accomplishment; *sarva* — of all; *karmaṇām* — actions; *proktāni* — which are described; *sāṅkhye* — in the Vedānta scriptures; *kṛta-ante* — in which is explained how to bring an end to *karma*.

O mighty-armed, learn from Me the five causes necessary for the accomplishment of all actions. They are described in the Vedānta scriptures which explain how to bring an end to *karma*. (18.13)

*adhiṣṭhānam tathā kartā karaṇam ca pṛthag-vidham
vividhāś ca pṛthak ceṣṭā daivam caivātra pañcamam*

[The five causes of action are as follows:]; *adhiṣṭhānam* — the seat of action [i.e., the body]; *tathā* — and; *kartā* — the agent [the living entity who identifies with the body]; *ca* — and; *pṛthak-*

vidham — the different types; *karaṇam* — [of] senses; *ca* — and; *vividhāḥ* — the various; *prthak* — distinct; *ceṣṭāḥ* — efforts; *ca eva* — and indeed; *daivam* — *daiva* [fate or the overseership of Paramātmā]; *pañcamam* — [which is] the fifth; *atra* — among them.

[The five causes of action are as follows:] the seat of action [the body], the agent [the living entity who identifies with the body], the various senses, the various types of distinct efforts [such as the movements of the vital currents within the body], and *daiva* [fate or the overseership of Paramātmā], which is the fifth cause among them. (18.14)

*śarīra-vāñ-manobhir yat karma prārabhate naraḥ
nyāyyam vā viparītaṁ vā pañcaite tasya hetavaḥ*

yat — whatever; *karma* — action; *nyāyyam vā* — whether righteous; *vā* — or; *viparītaṁ* — the opposite [i.e., unrighteous]; *naraḥ* — a person; *prārabhate* — performs; *śarīra* — by the body; *vāk* — by speech; *manobhiḥ* — [or] by the mind; *ete* — these; *pañca* — five; *tasya* — [are] its; *hetavaḥ* — causes.

Whatever action, whether righteous or unrighteous, a person performs by means of the body, speech, or the mind, these five are its causes. (18.15)

*tatraivaṁ sati kartāram ātmānam kevalam tu yaḥ
paśyaty akṛta-buddhitvān na sa paśyati durmatih*

evam — such; *sati* — being the case; *tu* — however; *yaḥ* — one who; *paśyati* — considers; *ātmānam* — himself; *kevalam* — as the sole; *kartāram* — agent; *tatra* — in this matter; *saḥ* — he; *durmatih* — being foolish; *na paśyati* — does not in fact see; *akṛta-buddhitvāt* — because of unrefined intellect.

Such being the case, however, one who considers himself as the sole agent in this matter—he, being foolish, does not in fact see, because of unrefined intellect. (18.16)

*yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate
hatvāpi sa imāṃ lokān na hanti na nibadhyate*

yasya—one to whom; *ahaṅkṛtaḥ bhāvaḥ*—the notion of being the doer; *na*—does not exist; *yasya*—[and] whose; *buddhiḥ*—intellect; *na lipyate*—is not tainted [by attachment]; *saḥ*—he; *hatvā api*—even on slaughtering; *imān*—[all] these; *lokān*—people; *na hanti*—does not in fact kill; *na nibadhyate*—nor is he bound [by the results of his actions].

A person who has no notion of being the doer, and whose intellect is not tainted [by attachment], even on slaughtering all these people, does not in fact kill nor is he bound by the results of his actions. (18.17)

*jñānam jñeyam pariñātā tri-vidhā karma-codanā
karaṇam karma karteti tri-vidhaḥ karma-saṅgrahaḥ*

jñānam—knowledge; *jñeyam*—the object of knowledge; *pariñātā*—[and] the knower; *tri-vidhā*—[form] the threefold; *codanā*—impulse; *karma*—[to] action; *karaṇam*—the instrument or means of action; *karma*—the object of action; *kartā*—[and] the agent; *iti*—these; *tri-vidhaḥ*—[are] the threefold; *karma-saṅgrahaḥ*—constituents of action.

Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower together form the the threefold impulse to action. The instrument of action, the object of action, and the subject, or the agent, are the threefold constituents of action. (18.18)

*jñānam karma ca kartā ca tridhāiva guṇa-bhedaṭaḥ
procyate guṇa-saṅkhyāne yathāvac chṛṇu tāny api*

guṇa-saṅkhyāne — in the Sāṅkhya texts [outlining the theory of the *guṇas*]; *jñānam* — knowledge; *ca* — and; *karma* — action; *ca* — and; *kartā* — the agent; *procyate* — are said to be; *tridhā eva* — of three types; *guṇa-bhedaṭaḥ* — according to the distinctions of the *guṇas*; *śṛṇu* — please hear; *tāni* — [of] them; *api* — also; *yathā-vat* — in precise accordance with their actual nature.

In the Sāṅkhya texts outlining the theory of the *guṇas*, knowledge, action, and the agent are enumerated to be of three types according to the distinctions of the *guṇas*. Please hear of them also in precise accordance with their actual nature. (18.19)

*sarva-bhūteṣu yenaikam bhāvam avyayam īkṣate
avibhaktam vibhakteṣu taj jñānam viddhi sāttvikam*

yena — [the knowledge] by which; *īkṣate* — one sees; *ekam* — one; *avyayam* — imperishable; *avibhaktam* — [and] indivisible; *bhāvam* — reality; *vibhakteṣu* — in all the diverse; *sarva-bhūteṣu* — species of life; *viddhi* — know; *tat* — that; *jñānam* — knowledge; *sāttvikam* — to be *sāttvika*.

The knowledge by which one sees one imperishable and indivisible reality in all the diverse species of life — know that knowledge to be *sāttvika*. (18.20)

*prthaktvena tu yaj jñānam nānā-bhāvān prthag-vidhān
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu taj jñānam viddhi rājasam*

tu — but; *prthaktvena* — the dualistic; *jñānam* — knowledge; *yaj* — which; *vetti* — recognizes; *nānā-bhāvān* — a plurality of living

beings; *pr̥thak-vidhān*—of distinct variety; *sarveṣu*—in all; *bhūteṣu*—living forms; *viddhi*—know; *tat*—that; *jñānam*—knowledge; *rājasam*—to be *rājasika*.

But the dualistic knowledge which recognizes a plurality of living beings of distinct variety in all living forms—know that knowledge to be *rājasika*. (18.21)

*yat tu kṛtsna-vad ekasmin kārye saktam ahaitukam
atattvārtha-vad alpam ca tat tāmasam udāhṛtam*

tat—that [knowledge]; *tu*—however; *yat*—which; *saktam*—clings; *ekasmin*—to a single; *kārye*—object or act; *kṛtsna-vat*—as if it were everything; *ahaitukam*—which is irrational; *atattva-artha-vat*—devoid of essential truth; *ca*—and; *alpam*—trivial; *udāhṛtam*—is said; *tāmasam*—to be *tāmasika*.

That knowledge, however, which clings to a single object or act as if it were the all-in-all, which is irrational, devoid of essential truth, and trivial, is said to be *tāmasika*. (18.22)

*niyatam saṅga-rahitam arāga-dveṣataḥ kṛtam
aphala-prepsunā karma yat tat sāttvikam ucyate*

tat—that; *karma*—action; *yat*—which; *niyatam*—[is] enjoined by scripture; *kṛtam*—[which is] performed; *saṅga-rahitam*—without attachment; *arāga-dveṣataḥ*—[and] devoid of attraction or repulsion; *aphala-prepsunā*—by a person not yearning for its fruit; *ucyate*—is called; *sāttvikam*—*sāttvika*.

That action which is enjoined by scripture, which is performed without attachment, and devoid of attraction or repulsion, by a person not yearning for its fruit, is called *sāttvika*. (18.23)

*yat tu kāmepsunā karma sāhaṅkāreṇa vā punaḥ
kriyate bahulāyāsaṁ tad rājasam udāhṛtam*

tat—that; *karma*—action; *tu*—however; *yat*—which; *kriyate*—is performed; *bahula-āyāsaṁ*—with great effort; *kāma-īpsunā*—by a person hankering for enjoyment; *vā punaḥ*—or alternatively; *sa-ahaṅkāreṇa*—out of egotism; *udāhṛtam*—is called; *rājasam*—*rājasika*.

That action, however, which is performed with great effort by a person hankering for enjoyment or out of egotism, is called *rājasika*. (18.24)

*anubandham kṣayam hiṁsām anapekṣya ca pauruṣam
mohād ārabhyate karma yat tat tāmasam ucyate*

tat—that; *karma*—action; *yat*—which; *ārabhyate*—is undertaken; *mohāt*—out of delusion; *anapekṣya*—without consideration; *anubandham*—[of] its consequences; *kṣayam*—the detriment it may bring; *hiṁsām*—the violence it may cause to oneself or others; *ca*—and; *pauruṣam*—one’s capability to perform it; *ucyate*—is called; *tāmasam*—*tāmasika*.

That action which is undertaken out of delusion, without considering its consequences, the detriment it may bring, the violence it may cause to oneself or others, and whether one has the requisite power to perform it, is called *tāmasika*. (18.25)

*mukta-saṅgo ’nahaṁ-vādī
dhr̥ty-utsāha-samanvitaḥ
siddhy-asiddhyor nirvikāraḥ
kartā sāttvika ucyate*

kartā—the agent; *mukta-saṅgaḥ*—[who is] free from attachment; *anaham-vādī*—devoid of egotism; *samanvitaḥ*—endowed with; *dhṛti*—fortitude; *utsāha*—[and] enthusiasm; *nirvikāraḥ*—[and] who is unaffected; *siddhi*—by success; *asiddhyoḥ*—or failure; *ucyate*—is said; *sāttvikaḥ*—to be *sāttvika*.

An agent who is free from attachment to action and its fruit, devoid of egotism, endowed with fortitude and enthusiasm, and unaffected by success or failure, is considered to be *sāttvika*. (18.26)

*rāgī karma-phala-prepsur lubdho himsātmako 'śuciḥ
harṣa-śokānvitaḥ kartā rājasah parikīrtitaḥ*

kartā—the agent; *rāgī*—who is attached to work; *prepsuḥ*—who is desirous; *karma-phala*—[of] the fruit of action; *lubdhaḥ*—greedy [for sense objects]; *himsā-ātmakaḥ*—violent by nature; *aśuciḥ*—unclean; *harṣa-śoka-anvitaḥ*—[and] prone to happiness and grief; *parikīrtitaḥ*—is said; *rājasah*—to be *rājasika*.

An agent who is attached to work, desirous of the fruit of action, greedy for sense objects, violent by nature, unclean, and prone to happiness and grief, is said to be *rājasika*. (18.27)

*ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko 'lasaḥ
viṣādī dīrgha-sūtrī ca kartā tāmasa ucyate*

kartā—the agent; *ayuktaḥ*—who acts improperly; *prākṛtaḥ*—who is uncultured; *stabdhaḥ*—arrogant; *śaṭhaḥ*—deceitful; *naiṣkṛtikaḥ*—overbearing; *alasaḥ*—indolent; *viṣādī*—

despondent; *ca* — and; *dīrgha-sūtrī* — procrastinating; *ucyate* — is called; *tāmasaḥ* — *tāmasika*.

An agent who acts improperly and who is uncultured, arrogant, deceitful, overbearing, indolent, despondent, and procrastinating is called *tāmasika*. (18.28)

*buddher bhedaṁ dhr̥teś caiva guṇatas tri-vidhaṁ śṛṇu
procyamānam aśeṣeṇa pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya*

dhanam-jaya — O winner of wealth; *śṛṇu* — hear now; *tri-vidham* — of the threefold; *bhedam* — division; *buddheḥ* — of intelligence; *ca eva* — and indeed; *dhr̥teḥ* — of determination; *guṇataḥ* — according to the *guṇas*; *procyamānam* — as they are explained; *aśeṣeṇa* — exhaustively; *pṛthaktvena* — one by one.

O Dhanañjaya, hear now about the three divisions of intelligence and determination according to the *guṇas* of nature, as I explain them exhaustively one by one. (18.29)

*pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca kāryākārye bhayābhaye
bandhaṁ mokṣaṁ ca yā vetti buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī*

pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *sā* — that; *buddhiḥ* — intelligence; *yā* — which; *vetti* — discriminates; *pravṛttim ca* — [between] action; *ca* — and; *nivṛttim* — renunciation; *kārya* — [between] what is to be done; *akārye* — [and] what is to be avoided; *bhaya* — [between that which results in] fear; *abhaye* — [and that which causes] fearlessness; *bandham* — [and between] bondage; *ca* — and; *mokṣam* — liberation; *sāttvikī* — [is] *sāttvika*.

O Arjuna, that intelligence which discriminates between the paths of action and renunciation, between what is to be done and what is to be avoided, between that which results in fear

and that which causes fearlessness, and between bondage and liberation, is *sāttvika*. (18.30)

*yayā dharmam adharmaṁ ca kāryaṁ cākāryam eva ca
ayathāvat prajānāti buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī*

pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *sā* — that; *buddhiḥ* — intelligence; *yayā* — by which; *prajānāti* — one comprehends; *ayathā-vat* — inaccurately; *dharmam* — what is righteousness; *ca* — and; *adharmaṁ* — what is unrighteousness; *kāryam ca* — what ought to be done; *eva ca* — and indeed; *akāryam* — what is forbidden; *rājasī* — [is] *rājasika*.

O Arjuna, that intelligence by which one comprehends inaccurately what is righteousness (*dharmā*) and unrighteousness (*adharma*) and what ought to be done and what is forbidden, is *rājasika*. (18.31)

*adharmaṁ dharmam iti yā manyate tamasāvṛtā
sarvārthān viparītāṁś ca buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmāsī*

sā — that; *buddhiḥ* — intelligence; *yā* — which; *āvṛtā* — being covered; *tamasā* — by ignorance; *manyate* — conceives; *adharmaṁ* — unrighteousness; *dharmam* *iti* — as righteousness; *ca* — and; *sarva-arthān* — all things; *viparītān* — as contrary [to their real nature]; *tāmāsī* — is *tāmasika*; *pārtha* — O son of Pṛthā.

That intelligence which, being covered by ignorance, conceives unrighteousness as righteousness and all things as contrary to their real nature, is *tāmasika*, O Arjuna. (18.32)

*dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manah-prāṇendriya-kriyāḥ
yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī*

pārtha—O son of Pṛthā; *avyabhicāriṇyā*—the unswerving; *dhṛtyā*—determination; *yayā*—by which; *dhārayate*—one maintains; *kriyāḥ*—the functions; *manah*—[of] the mind; *prāṇa*—the vital force; *indriya*—[and] the senses; *yogena*—through mental fixity; *sā*—that; *dhṛtiḥ*—determination; *sāttvikī*—[is] *sāttvika*.

O Arjuna, the unswerving determination by which one maintains the functions of the mind, the vital force, and the senses through mental fixity is *sāttvika*. (18.33)

*yayā tu dharma-kāmārthān dhṛtyā dhārayate 'rjuna
prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha rājasī*

pārtha—O son of Pṛthā; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *dhṛtyā*—that determination; *tu*—however; *yayā*—by which; *dhārayate*—one holds fast; *dharma*—to duty; *kāma*—to worldly enjoyments; *arthān*—[and] to wealth; *phala-ākāṅkṣī*—desiring the fruits of action; *prasaṅgena*—with great attachment; *sā*—that; *dhṛtiḥ*—determination; *rājasī*—[is] *rājasika*.

O son of Pṛthā, O Arjuna, that determination, however, by which a person holds fast to duty (*dharma*), to worldly enjoyments, and to wealth, desiring the fruits of his action with great attachment, is *rājasika*. (18.34)

*yayā svapnam bhayaṁ śokaṁ viṣādaṁ madam eva ca
na vimuñcati durmedhā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī*

sā—that; *dhṛtiḥ*—determination; *yayā*—by which; *durmedhā*—a person bereft of discrimination; *na vimuñcati*—is unable

to relinquish; *svapnam* — sleep; *bhayam* — fear; *śokam* — grief; *viṣādam* — depression; *eva ca* — and indeed; *madam* — pride; *tāmasī* — [is] *tāmasika*; *pārtha* — O son of Pṛthā.

That determination by which a person bereft of discrimination is unable to relinquish sleep, fear, grief, depression, and pride is *tāmasika*, O Pārtha. (18.35)

*sukham tv idānīm tri-vidham śṛṇu me bharatarṣabha
abhyāsād ramate yatra duḥkhāntam ca nigacchati
yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇāme 'mṛtopamam
tat sukham sāttvikam proktam ātma-buddhi-prasāda-jam*

bharata-ṛṣabha — O best of the Bharatas; *idānīm tu* — now; *śṛṇu* — hear; *me* — from Me; *tri-vidham* — [of] the three kinds; *sukham* — [of] happiness; *yatra* — that [happiness] in which; *abhyāsāt* — through regulated practice [of *dharma*]; *ramate* — one experiences joy; *ca* — and; *nigacchati* — brings about; *antam* — the end; *duḥkha* — [of] misery; *tat* — that; *yat* — which; *viṣam iva* — [is] like poison; *agre* — in the beginning; *upamam* — [but] comparable; *amṛta* — [to] nectar; *pariṇāme* — in the end; *ātmā-buddhi-prasāda-jam* — [and] which is born of a placid intellect fixed on the self; *tat* — that; *sukham* — happiness; *proktam* — is declared; *sāttvikam* — as *sāttvika*.

O best of the Bharatas, now hear from Me about the three kinds of happiness. That happiness in which, through regulated practice [of *dharma*], one experiences joy and brings about the end of misery, which is like poison at first but like nectar in the end, and which is born of a placid intellect fixed on the self, is declared as *sāttvika*. (18.36–37)

*viṣayendriya-saṁyogād yat tad agre 'mṛtopamam
pariṇāme viṣam iva tat sukham rājasam smṛtam*

tat—that [happiness]; *yat*—which; *saṁyogāt*—[is derived] from contact; *indriya*—[of] the senses; *viṣaya*—[with] the sense objects; *amṛta-upamam*—[and which is] like nectar; *agre*—in the beginning; *viṣam iva*—[but] like poison; *pariṇāme*—in the end; *tat*—that; *sukham*—happiness; *smṛtam*—is considered; *rājasam*—as *rājasika*.

That happiness which is derived from contact of the senses with their objects, and which appears like nectar at first but like poison in the end, is considered as *rājasika*. (18.38)

*yad agre cānubandhe ca sukham mohanam ātmanaḥ
nidrālasya-pramādottham tat tāmasam udāhṛtam*

tat—that; *sukham*—happiness; *yat*—which; *mohanam*—[is] stupefying; *ātmanaḥ*—to the self; *agre ca*—in the beginning; *anubandhe ca*—and at the end; *uttham*—[and which] arises; *nidrā*—[from] sleep; *ālasya*—indolence; *pramāda*—[and] inadvertence; *udāhṛtam*—is called; *tāmasam*—*tāmasika*.

That happiness which stupefies the self both in the beginning as well as at the end, and which arises from sleep, indolence, and inadvertence, is called *tāmasika*. (18.39)

*na tad asti pṛthivyām vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ
sattvam prakṛti-jair muktaṁ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ*

na asti—there is no; *tat*—such; *sattvam*—living being or phenomenal object; *pṛthivyām*—[whether] on earth; *vā*—or; *divi*—in the celestial realm; *vā*—or; *punaḥ*—moreover; *deveṣu*—among the *devas*; *yat*—which; *syāt*—is; *muktaṁ*—free;

ebhiḥ—from these; *tribhiḥ*—three; *guṇaiḥ*—*guṇas*; *prakṛti-jaiḥ*—born of material nature.

There is no such living being or phenomenal object, whether on earth, in the celestial realm, or even among the *devas*, which is free from these three *guṇas* born of material nature. (18.40)

*brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-viśāṃ śūdrāṇāṃ ca parantapa
karmāṇi pravibhaktāni svabhāva-prabhavair guṇaiḥ*

param-tapa—O chastiser of foes; *karmāṇi*—the prescribed actions; *brāhmaṇa*—of the *brāhmaṇas*; *kṣatriya*—the *kṣatriyas*; *viśāṃ*—the *vaiśyas*; *ca*—and; *śūdrāṇāṃ*—of the *śūdras*; *pravibhaktāni*—are divided; *guṇaiḥ*—according to the *guṇas*; *prabhavaiḥ*—born of; *svabhāva*—[their previously acquired] nature.

O chastiser of foes, the prescribed actions of the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras* are appropriately divided according to the *guṇas* born of their previously acquired natures. (18.41)

*śamo damas tapaḥ śaucam kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca
jñānam vijñānam āstikyam brahma-karma svabhāva-jam*

brahma-karma—the duties of *brāhmaṇas*; *svabhāva-jam*—born of their acquired nature; [include]; *śamaḥ*—regulation of the mind; *damaḥ*—regulation of the external senses; *tapaḥ*—austerity; *śaucam*—purity; *kṣāntiḥ*—forbearance; *ārjavam*—simplicity; *jñānam*—knowledge; *vijñānam*—realization; *eva ca*—and indeed; *āstikyam*—theism [i.e., firm faith in scripture].

The duties of *brāhmaṇas*, born of their acquired nature, include regulation of the mind, regulation of the external senses, austerity, purity, forbearance, simplicity, knowledge, realization, and firm faith in scripture. (18.42)

*śauryam tejo dhṛtir dākṣyam yuddhe cāpy apalāyanam
dānam īśvara-bhāvaś ca kṣātram karma svabhāva-jam*

kṣātram-karma — the duties of *kṣatriyas*; *svabhāva-jam* — born of their acquired nature; [include]; *śauryam* — chivalry; *tejaḥ* — boldness; *dhṛtiḥ* — tenacity; *dākṣyam* — dexterity; *apalāyanam* — never fleeing; *ca api* — even; *yuddhe* — in the midst of battle; *dānam* — charity; *ca* — and; *īśvara-bhāvaḥ* — leadership.

The duties of *kṣatriyas*, born of their acquired nature, include chivalry, boldness, tenacity, dexterity, never fleeing even in the midst of battle, charity, and leadership. (18.43)

*kṛṣi-go-rakṣya-vāṇijyam vaiśya-karma svabhāva-jam
paricaryātmakam karma śūdrasyāpi svabhāva-jam*

vaiśya-karma — the duties of *vaiśyas*; *svabhāva-jam* — born of their acquired nature; [include]; *kṛṣi* — farming; *rakṣya* — protection; *go* — [of] cows; *vāṇijyam* — [and] engagement in trade and commerce; *api* — and; *karma* — the duty; *śūdrasya* — of *śūdras*; *svabhāva-jam* — born of their acquired nature; *ātmakam* — [is] of the nature of; *paricaryā* — service [to others].

The duties of *vaiśyas*, born of their acquired nature, include farming, tending cows, and engaging in trade and commerce. The duty of *śūdras*, born of their acquired nature, consists of rendering service to others. (18.44)

*sve sve karmany abhirataḥ
saṁsiddhim labhate naraḥ
sva-karma-nirataḥ siddhim
yathā vindati tac chṛṇu*

abhirataḥ — assiduously absorbed; *sve sve* — in one's own; *karmaṇi* — duties; *naraḥ* — a person; *labhate* — attains; *saṁsiddhim* — perfection; *śṛṇu* — please hear; *tat* — that [i.e., how]; *yathā* — in what manner; *nirataḥ* — one engaged; *sva-karma* — [in] his own duty; *vindati* — attains; *siddhim* — perfection.

Assiduously pursuing one's own duties, a person attains perfection. Please hear how one engaged in his own duty attains perfection. (18.45)

*yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām yena sarvam idam tatam
sva-karmaṇā tam abhyarcya siddhim vindati mānavaḥ*

mānavaḥ — a person; *vindati* — attains; *siddhim* — perfection; *abhyarcya* — by worshiping; *tam* — Him [i.e., God]; *yataḥ* — from whom; *pravṛttiḥ* — [originate] the actions; *bhūtānām* — of all beings; *yena* — [and] by whom; *idam* — this; *sarvam* — entire [cosmos]; *tatam* — is pervaded; *sva-karmaṇā* — through the execution of one's own duties.

One attains perfection by worshiping God, from whom the actions of all beings originate and by whom this entire cosmos is pervaded, through the execution of one's own duties. (18.46)

*śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt
svabhāva-niyataṁ karma kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam*

sva-dharmaḥ — the performance of one's own duty; *viguṇaḥ* — [even if] defective; *śreyān* — [is] superior; *para-dharmāt* — to taking up another's duty; *su-anuṣṭhitāt* — [even if] performed well; *na āpnoti* — one does not incur; *kilbiṣam* — sin; *kurvan* — by performing; *karma* — the duty; *svabhāva-niyatam* — ordained according to one's acquired nature.

The performance of one's own duty, even if somehow deficient, is superior to taking up another's duty, even if performed well. One incurs no sin by performing the duty ordained according to one's acquired nature. (18.47)

*saha-jam karma kaunteya sa-doṣam api na tyajet
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnir ivāvṛtāḥ*

kaunteya — O son of Kuntī; *na tyajet* — one should not abandon; *karma* — the duty; *saha-jam* — born of one's own nature; *sa-doṣam api* — even if it is tainted with defect; *hi* — because; *sarva-ārambhāḥ* — all undertakings; *āvṛtāḥ* — are covered; *doṣeṇa* — with some defect; *iva* — just as; *agniḥ* — fire; *dhūmena* — [is covered] by smoke.

O son of Kuntī, one should not abandon the duty born of one's own nature even if it is tainted with defect, because all undertakings are covered by some defect, just as fire is covered by smoke. (18.48)

*asakta-buddhiḥ sarvatra jitātmā vigata-sprhaḥ
naiṣkarmya-siddhim paramām sannyāsenādhigacchati*

asakta-buddhiḥ — one whose intellect is unattached; *sarvatra* — to anything; *jita-ātmā* — whose mind is regulated; *vigata-sprhaḥ* — [and] who is devoid of desire; *adhigacchati* — attains; *paramām* — the supreme; *naiṣkarmya-siddhim* — state of

freedom from consequential action; *sannyāsenā*—through renunciation.

One whose intellect is unattached to anything, whose mind is regulated, and who is devoid of desire for sense pleasure, attains the supreme state of freedom from consequential action through renunciation [of the results of action]. (18.49)

*siddhiṁ prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me
samāsenaiiva kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā*

kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; *nibodha*—learn; *me*—from Me; *samāsenā eva*—in brief; *tathā*—that manner; *yathā*—by which [manner]; *prāptaḥ*—a person who has attained; *siddhiṁ*—the perfection [of freedom from consequential action]; *āpnoti*—realizes; *brahma*—Brahman; *yā*—which; *parā*—[is] the highest; *niṣṭhā*—culmination; *jñānasya*—of knowledge.

O son of Kuntī, learn from Me in brief how a person who has attained the perfection of freedom from consequential action realizes Brahman, which is the highest culmination of knowledge. (18.50)

*buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dhṛtyātmānam niyamyā ca
śabdādīn viṣayānś tyaktvā rāga-dveṣau vyudasya ca
vivikta-sevī laghv-āśī yata-vāk-kāya-mānasaḥ
dhyāna-yoga-paro nityam vairāgyam samupāśritaḥ
ahaṅkāram balaṁ darpaṁ kāmam krodham parigraham
vimucya nirmamaḥ śānto brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

yuktaḥ—endowed; *viśuddhayā*—with pure; *buddhyā*—intellect; *ca*—and; *niyamyā*—controlling; *ātmānam*—the mind; *dhṛtyā*—with fortitude; *tyaktvā*—forsaking; *viṣayān*—

sense objects; *śabda-ādīn* — such as pleasing sound; *ca* — and; *vyudasya* — giving up completely; *rāga* — attachment; *dveṣau* — [and] hatred; *vivikta-sevī* — living in a solitary place; *laghu-āśī* — eating little; *yata* — controlling; *vāk* — speech; *kāya* — the body; *mānasaḥ* — [and] mind; *nityam* — [being] always; *dhyāna-yoga-paraḥ* — devoted to the *yoga* of meditation; *samupāśritaḥ* — fully taking refuge; *vairāgyam* — [in] dispassion; *vimucya* — giving up; *ahaṅkāram* — egotism; *balam* — the force of material desires; *darpaṃ* — arrogance; *kāmaṃ* — desire for sense pleasures; *krodham* — anger; *parigrahaṃ* — [and] possessions; *nirmamaḥ* — being free from the notion of ownership; *śāntaḥ* — [and] being serene at heart; *kalpate* — one becomes eligible; *brahma-bhūyāya* — to realize Brahman.

Endowed with pure intellect; controlling the mind with fortitude; forsaking sense objects such as pleasing sound; giving up attachment and hatred completely; living in a solitary place and eating little; controlling the body, speech, and mind; being ever devoted to the *yoga* of meditation [on Bhagavān]; fully taking refuge in dispassion; giving up egotism, the force of material desires, arrogance, desires for sense pleasures, anger, and possessions; and being free from the notion of ownership and serene at heart, one becomes eligible to realize Brahman. (18.51–53)

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṃ labhate parām*

brahma-bhūtaḥ — having realized Brahman; *prasanna-ātmā* — [and] being peaceful; *na śocati* — one neither grieves; *na kāṅkṣati* — nor desires; *samaḥ* — being equal; *sarveṣu* — to all; *bhūteṣu* — living beings; *labhate* — one attains; *parām* — supreme; *mat-bhaktiṃ* — devotion to Me.

Having realized Brahman and being peaceful, one neither grieves nor hankers for anything. Being equal to all beings, one attains supreme devotion to Me. (18.54)

***bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tad-anantaram***

bhaktyā—through that supreme devotion; *abhijānāti*—one fully realizes; *mām*—Me; *tattvataḥ*—in truth; *yāvān*—what the extent of My glories are; *ca*—and; *yaḥ*—who [in My essential nature]; *asmi*—I am; *tat-anantaram*—thereafter; *jñātvā*—on knowing; *mām*—Me; *tattvataḥ*—in reality; *tataḥ*—through that [i.e., through such devotion]; *viśate*—one enters [into Me].

Through that supreme devotion, one fully realizes Me in truth, what the extent of My glories are and who I am in My essential nature. Thereafter, on knowing Me in reality through such devotion, one enters into Me [achieves *sāyujya* liberation].¹ (18.55)

***sarva-karmāṇy api sadā kurvāṇo mad-vyapāśrayaḥ
mat-prasādād avāpnoti śāśvatam padam avyayam***

api—even though; *sadā*—always; *kurvāṇaḥ*—engaged in carrying out; *sarva*—all manner; *karmāṇi*—[of] actions; *mat-vyapāśrayaḥ*—the person who has taken shelter of Me; *avāpnoti*—attains; *śāśvatam*—the eternal; *avyayam*—[and] immutable; *padam*—status; *mat-prasādāt*—by My grace.

Even though always engaged in carrying out all manner of actions, the person who has taken shelter of Me attains the eternal and immutable status by My grace. (18.56)

*cetasā sarva-karmāṇi mayi sannyasya mat-paraḥ
buddhi-yogam upāśritya mac-cittaḥ satataṁ bhāva*

sannyasya — dedicating; *sarva-karmāṇi* — all actions; *mayi* — to Me; *cetasā* — through the mind; *mat-paraḥ* — regarding Me as the supreme goal; *upāśritya* — [and] taking refuge; *buddhi-yogam* — of the *yoga* of resolute discrimination [i.e., of intellect resolutely fixed on Me]; *bhāva* — be; *satatam* — always; *mat-cittaḥ* — in the state of mental absorption in Me.

Dedicating all your actions to Me through your mind, regarding Me as the supreme goal, and taking refuge of the *yoga* of resolute discrimination [of intellect resolutely fixed on Me], be always in the state of mental absorption in Me. (18.57)

*mac-cittaḥ sarva-durgāṇi mat-prasādāt tariṣyasi
atha cet tvam ahaṅkārān na śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi*

mat-cittaḥ — with your mind thus fixed on Me; *tariṣyasi* — you will cross over; *sarva* — all; *durgāṇi* — obstacles; *mat-prasādāt* — by My grace; *atha* — but; *cet* — if; *ahaṅkārāt* — out of egotism; *tvam* — you; *na śroṣyasi* — will not listen; *vinaṅkṣyasi* — you will perish.

With your mind thus fixed on Me, you will cross over all obstacles by My grace. But, if out of egotism you will not listen to Me, you will perish. (18.58)

*yad ahaṅkāram āśritya na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiṣa vyavasāyas te prakṛtis tvām niyokṣyati*

āśritya — by falling prey; *ahaṅkāram* — to the separatist ego-sense; *yad* — that which; *manyase* — you are thinking; *na yotsye*

iti — “I will not fight;” *eṣaḥ* — this; *vyavasāyaḥ* — resolve; *te* — of yours; *mithyā* — is useless; [because]; *prakṛtiḥ* — material nature; *niyokṣyati* — will compel; *tvām* — you [to fight].

By falling prey to the separatist ego-sense, you are thinking, “I will not fight.” Yet, this resolve of yours is useless, because your nature will compel you to fight. (18.59)

*svabhāva-jena kaunteya nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā
kartuṁ necchasi yan mohāt kariṣyasi avaśo 'pi tat*

kaunteya — O son of Kuntī; *yat* — what; *mohāt* — out of delusion; *na icchasi* — you do not wish; *kartum* — to perform; *tat* — that; *kariṣyasi* — you will perform; *avaśaḥ* — helplessly; *api* — in any case; *nibaddhaḥ* — being bound; *svena* — by your own; *karmaṇā* — actions; *svabhāva-jena* — born of your acquired nature.

O son of Kuntī, what, out of delusion, you do not wish to perform, you will perform helplessly in any case, being bound by your own actions born of your acquired nature. (18.60)

*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

arjuna — O Arjuna; *īśvaraḥ* — the Supreme Immanent Self; *tiṣṭhati* — resides; *hṛd-deśe* — in the hearts; *sarva-bhūtānām* — of all living beings; *māyayā* — by His extrinsic potency; *bhrāmayan* — He is causing to revolve; *sarva-bhūtāni* — all living beings; *ārūḍhani* — [as if] they were riding; *yantra* — [on] the machine [of their bodies].

O Arjuna, the Supreme Immanent Self (Īśvara) resides in the hearts of all living beings. By His extrinsic potency, He causes all of them to revolve [through cycles of creation, maintenance, and destruction] as if they were riding upon the machine of their bodies. (18.61)

***tam eva śaraṇaṁ gaccha sarva-bhāvena bhārata
tat-prasādāt parāṁ śāntiṁ sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śāśvatam***

bhārata — O Arjuna; *gaccha* — go [i.e., seek]; *śaraṇaṁ* — refuge; *tam* — [in] Him; *eva* — alone; *sarva-bhāvena* — with all your being; *tat-prasādāt* — by His grace; *prāpsyasi* — you will attain; *parāṁ* — supreme; *śāntiṁ* — peace; *śāśvatam* — [and] the eternal; *sthānaṁ* — abode.

O Arjuna, seek refuge in Him alone with all of your being. By His grace you will attain supreme peace and the eternal abode. (18.62)

***iti te jñānam ākhyātaṁ guhyād guhyataram mayā
vimṛśyaitad aśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru***

iti — thus; *jñānam* — knowledge; *guhya-taram* — more secret; *guhyāt* — than secret; *ākhyātaṁ* — has been declared; *mayā* — by Me; *te* — to you; *vimṛśya* — reflect; *etat* — [on] this; *aśeṣeṇa* — fully; *kuru* — [and then] do; *tathā* — that manner [of action]; *yathā* — as; *icchasi* — you wish [to do].

Thus, I have declared to you knowledge more secret than all secrets. Reflect on it fully and then do as you wish. (18.63)

***sarva-guhyatamaṁ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ
iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍham iti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam***

śṛṇu—hear; *bhūyaḥ*—again; *me*—My; *paramam*—supreme; *vacaḥ*—instruction; *sarva-guhya-tamam*—the foremost of all secrets; *iti*—because; *asi*—you are; *dṛḍham*—extremely; *iṣṭaḥ*—dear; *me*—to Me; *tataḥ*—therefore; *vakṣyāmi*—I shall disclose; *hitam*—this beneficial [teaching]; *te*—to you.

Hear again My supreme instruction, the foremost of all secrets. Because you are extremely dear to Me, I shall disclose this beneficial teaching to you. (18.64)

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi satyaṁ te pratijāne priyo 'si me*

mat-manāḥ—fix your mind on Me; *bhava*—become; *mat-bhaktaḥ*—My devotee; *mat-yājī*—[and] My worshiper; *namaskuru*—[and] bow down; *mām*—to Me; [by doing so]; *eṣyasi*—you will come; *mām*—to Me; *eva*—certainly; *pratijāne*—I promise [this]; *te*—to you; *satyaṁ*—truly; *asi*—[because] you are; *priyaḥ*—dear; *me*—to Me.

Fix your mind on Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and bow down to Me. By doing so, you will come to Me. I promise this to you truly, because you are dear to Me. (18.65)

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

parityajya—abandoning completely; *sarva-dharmān*—all [attachment to] conventional duties; *vraja*—seek; *śaraṇam*—refuge; *mām*—[in] Me; *ekaṁ*—alone; *ahaṁ*—I; *mokṣayiṣyāmi*—will free; *tvām*—you;² *sarva-pāpebhyaḥ*—from all sins; *mā*—do not; *śucaḥ*—grieve.

Abandoning completely all [attachment to] conventional duties, seek refuge in Me alone. I will free you from all sins; do not grieve. (18.66)

*idaṁ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana
na cāśuśrūṣave vācyam na ca mām yo 'bhyasūyati*

idaṁ — this [confidential knowledge]; *na vācyam* — is not to be revealed; *te* — by you; *kadācana* — at any time; *na* — neither; *atapaskāya* — to one who is not prepared to undergo spiritual discipline; *na* — nor; *abhaktāya* — to one who is devoid of devotion; *na* — nor; *ca* — also; *āśuśrūṣave* — to one who is not whole-heartedly inquisitive; *ca* — and; [not to one]; *yaḥ* — who; *abhyasūyati* — is envious; *mām* — toward Me.

This confidential knowledge should never be revealed by you to a person who is not prepared to undergo spiritual discipline, or to one who is devoid of devotion, or to one who is not whole-heartedly inquisitive, or to one who is envious of Me. (18.67)

*ya idaṁ paramaṁ guhyam mad-bhakteṣv abhidhāsyati
bhaktim mayi parāṁ kṛtvā mām evaiṣyaty asaṁśayaḥ*

yaḥ — one who; *abhidhāsyati* — will impart; *idaṁ* — this; *paramaṁ* — supreme; *guhyam* — secret; *mat* — to My; *bhakteṣu* — devotees; *kṛtvā* — thus executing; *parāṁ* — supreme; *bhaktim* — devotion; *mayi* — to Me; *eṣyati* — will come; *mām eva* — to Me alone; *asaṁśayaḥ* — without doubt.

One who imparts this supreme secret wisdom to My devotees, thus executing supreme devotion to Me, comes to Me alone. There is no doubt about it. (18.68)

*na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścīn me priya-kṛttamaḥ
bhavitā na ca me tasmād anyāḥ priyataraḥ bhuvī*

na ca — moreover there is not; *kaścīn* — anyone; *manuṣyeṣu* — among human beings; *priya-kṛt-tamaḥ* — who renders greater loving service; *me* — to Me; *tasmāt* — than such a person; *na ca* — nor; *bhavitā* — will there be; *anyāḥ* — anyone else; *priyataraḥ* — dearer; *me* — to Me; *bhuvī* — on earth; *tasmāt* — than he.

Moreover, there is none among humans who renders greater loving service to Me than such a person, nor will there be anyone else dearer to Me on earth than he. (18.69)

*adhyeṣyate ca ya imam dharmyam saṁvādam āvayoḥ
jñāna-yajñena tenāham iṣṭaḥ syām iti me matiḥ*

ca — and; *yaḥ* — whosoever; *adhyeṣyate* — will study; *imam* — this; *dharmyam* — sacred; *saṁvādam* — dialogue; *āvayoḥ* — of ours; *tena* — by him; *aham* — I; *syām* — shall be; *iṣṭaḥ* — worshiped; *yajñena* — through the sacrifice; *jñāna* — [of] wisdom; *iti* — such; *me* — [is] My; *matiḥ* — opinion.

And whosoever will study this sacred dialogue of ours, will worship Me through the sacrifice of wisdom. This is My opinion. (18.70)

*śraddhāvān anasūyaś ca śṛṇuyād api yo naraḥ
so 'pi muktaḥ śubhāṁl lokān prāpnuyāt puṇya-karmaṇām*

naraḥ — a person; *yaḥ* — who; *śṛṇuyād api* — merely hears [this teaching]; *śraddhāvān* — with faith; *ca* — and; *anasūyaḥ* — without a fault-finding spirit; *saḥ* — he; *api* — also; *muktaḥ* — becomes liberated; *prāpnuyāt* — [and] attains; *śubhān* — the

auspicious; *lokān* — planets; *punya-karmaṇām* — of the virtuous.

A person who merely hears [this teaching] with faith and without a fault-finding spirit also becomes liberated and attains the auspicious planets of the virtuous. (18.71)

*kaccid etac chrutaṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā
kaccid ajñāna-sammohaḥ praṇaṣṭas te dhanañjaya*

pārtha — O son of Pṛthā; *kaccit* — has; *etat* — this [message]; *śrutam* — been heard; *tvayā* — by you; *eka-agreṇa cetasā* — with single-minded attention; *kaccit* — has; *te* — your; *sammohaḥ* — delusion; *ajñāna* — [born of] ignorance; *praṇaṣṭaḥ* — been destroyed; *ghanam-jaya* — O conqueror of wealth (Arjuna).

O Pārtha, have you heard this message with single-minded attention? Has your delusion born of ignorance been destroyed, O Arjuna? (18.72)

*arjuna uvāca
naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā tvat-prasādān mayācyuta
sthito 'smi gata-sandehaḥ kariṣye vacanam tava*

arjunaḥ uvāca — Arjuna said; *acyuta* — O Infallible One; *tvat-prasādāt* — by Your grace; *mohaḥ* — [my] delusion; *naṣṭaḥ* — is destroyed; *smṛtiḥ* — memory [regarding my intrinsic nature]; *labdhā* — has been gained; *mayā* — by me; *asmi* — I am; *sthitaḥ* — standing [ready to fight]; *sandehaḥ* — [my] doubt [related to *adharma*]; *gata* — has been dispelled; *kariṣye* — I will follow; *tava* — Your; *vacanam* — words.

Arjuna said: O Acyuta (Infallible One), by Your grace my delusion is destroyed. I have gained memory [regarding my

intrinsic nature], and I stand ready to fight, my doubt [related to *adharma*] having been dispelled. I will follow Your words. (18.73)

sañjaya uvāca
ity ahaṁ vāsudevasya
pārthasya ca mahātmanaḥ
saṁvādam imam aśrauṣam
adbhutaṁ roma-harṣaṇam

sañjayaḥ uvāca — Sañjaya said; *iti* — thus; *aham* — I; *aśrauṣam* — have heard; *imam* — this; *adbhutam* — astonishing; *roma-harṣaṇam* — [and] ecstatic; *saṁvādam* — dialogue; *mahā-ātmanaḥ*³ — between the Great Selves; *vāsudevasya* — Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *ca* — and; *pārthasya* — Arjuna.

Sañjaya said: Thus, I have heard this astonishing and ecstatic dialogue between the Supreme Self, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the great being, Arjuna. (18.74)

vyāsa-prasādāc chrutavān etad guhyam ahaṁ param
yogaṁ yogeśvarāt kṛṣṇāt sākṣāt kathayataḥ svayam

vyāsa-prasādāt — through the mercy of Śrī Vyāsa; *aham* — I; *śrutavān* — have heard; *etat* — this; *param* — supremely; *guhyam* — confidential; *yogaṁ* — wisdom of *yoga*; *sākṣāt* — directly; *kṛṣṇāt* — from Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *yoga-īśvarāt* — the master of *yoga*; *kathayataḥ* — while being spoken; *svayam* — by Him.

Through the mercy of Śrī Vyāsa, I have heard this supremely confidential wisdom of *yoga* directly from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of *yoga*, while being spoken by Him. (18.75)

*rājan saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya saṁvādam imam adbhutam
keśavārjunayoḥ puṇyam hr̥ṣyāmi ca muhur muhuḥ*

rājan — O King; *saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya* — recalling repeatedly; *imam* — this; *adbhutam* — wonderful; *puṇyam* — [and] sacred; *saṁvādam* — dialogue; *keśava* — between Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *arjunayoḥ* — [and] Arjuna; *hr̥ṣyāmi* — I am delighted; *ca* — moreover; *muhur muhuḥ* — again and again.

O King, recalling repeatedly this wonderful and sacred dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, I am delighted again and again. (18.76)

*tac ca saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya rūpam aty-adbhutaṁ hareḥ
vismayo me mahān rājan hr̥ṣyāmi ca punaḥ punaḥ*

ca — furthermore; *rājan* — O King; *saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya* — as I recall repeatedly; *tat* — that; *aty-adbhutam* — most astonishing; *rūpam* — form; *hareḥ* — of Śrī Hari; *me* — my; *vismayaḥ* — wonder; *mahān* — [is] great; *ca* — and; *hr̥ṣyāmi* — I rejoice; *punaḥ punaḥ* — again and again.

Furthermore, O King, as I recall repeatedly that most astonishing form of Śrī Hari, my wonder is great, and I rejoice again and again. (18.77)

*yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārho dhanur-dharaḥ
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama*

yatra — wherever; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — [there is] Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *yoga-īśvaraḥ* — the master of yoga; *yatra* — [and] wherever; *pārthaḥ* — [there is] Arjuna, the son of Prthā; *dhanuḥ-dharaḥ* — the wielder of the bow; *tatra* — there; *dhruvā* — [will] surely [be found]; *śrīḥ* —

opulence; *vijayaḥ* — victory; *bhūtiḥ* — prosperity; *nītiḥ* — [and] statesmanship; *mama* — [this is] my; *matiḥ* — conviction.

Wherever there is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of *yoga*, and wherever there is Arjuna, the wielder of the bow, there will surely be opulence, victory, prosperity, and statesmanship. This is my conviction. (18.78)



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1. There are five types of liberation, *sāyujya* being one of them. It means the state of complete identity with the Absolute.
 2. *Tvā* is an optional form of *tvām*, the accusative case, singular, of *yuṣmad* (you).
 3. This qualifier has been applied in translation both to *vāsudevasya* and to *pārthasya*. As a qualifier of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is rendered as “the Supreme Self,” and as a qualifier of Arjuna, as “the great being.”

SATYANARAYANA DASA

Born in 1954, Satyanarayana Dasa was drawn to the spiritual traditions of his home country India since his childhood. After receiving a postgraduate degree in 1978 from IIT Delhi, he then worked in the United States for four years. After this period, he returned to India to begin formal study of the orthodox systems of Indian philosophy, known as *śaḍ-darśana*, under the direct guidance of his guru, Śrī Haridāsa Śāstrī Mahārāja, and Svāmī Śyāma Śaraṇa Mahārāja. This education was pursued in the traditional manner for more than 25 years as he dedicated himself to the practice of *bhakti-yoga*. In 1991 he accepted the traditional Vaiṣṇava order of renounced life, *bābājī-veṣa*. His main focus has been on the works of Jīva Gosvāmī, particularly the *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas*, providing English translation and commentary. He also earned four *śāstric* degrees, and received both a law degree and a PhD in Sanskrit from Agra University.

Satyanarayana Dasa is the director of the Jiva Institute of Vaishnava Studies in Vrindavan, India. In 2013 he was honored by the president of India, Pranab Mukherjee, for his extraordinary contribution in presenting Vedic culture and philosophy to students and audiences within India and internationally.